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THE HAMMER  
AND THE SCYTHE

THE MODERN WORLD AND  
ITS AFFAIRS

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LATIN AMERICA IN WORLD POLITICS  
*by J. Fred Rippy*

WE FIGHT FOR OIL  
*by Ludwell Denny*

ENGLAND'S HOLY WAR  
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LORD GREY AND THE WORLD WAR  
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LOCARNO: A DISPASSIONATE VIEW  
*by Alfred Fabre-Luce*

# THE HAMMER AND THE SCYTHE

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COMMUNIST RUSSIA  
ENTERS THE SECOND DECADE

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BY  
ANNE O'HARE MCCORMICK



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NEW YORK · ALFRED · A · KNOPE  
1928

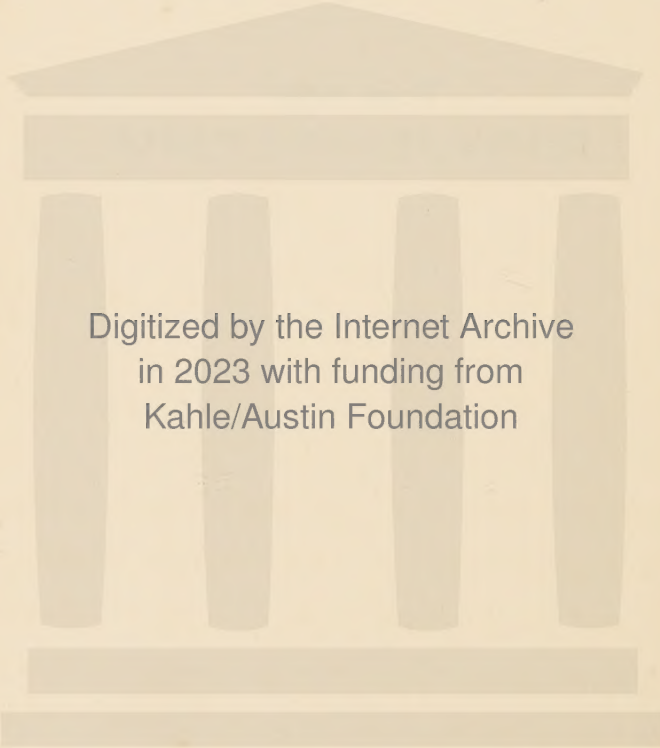
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*To my mother*

TERESA BEATRICE O'HARE



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## PREFACE

*THIS book is not a study, economic, social or political, of Russia or of Bolshevism. Others better qualified may make such studies if they can. It is not a judgment. Nothing in Russia is fixed enough to hang a judgment on. It is based upon a series of articles written for The New York Times, since amplified and recast, and reports the impressions of one observer who went to Russia ten years after the Revolution to ask the questions*

*that any one alive to-day must ask of the biggest event of his time. Most of the questions are primer questions; I have proceeded on the assumption that others would want to know the things that I wanted to know. Many aspects of an almost illimitable subject are not even touched. If those that are glanced at were fully dealt with every chapter of this book would have to be extended into a volume. As it is, the chapters are summary views of the fields wherein the revolutionary changes dictated by the Soviet system seem most to affect "the general interests of mankind." I have put down what I saw, which accounts for such blind spots and such glimmers of light as may be in these pages, and sometimes, since Russia is above all an adventure of the mind, what I wondered about what I saw.*

*One summer in Russia is, of course, nothing, but ten summers would be no more; the first guess is almost as good as the last. It was a time of constant physical activity and mental readjustment, of days lived in motion, in crowds, in clouds of talk, always at a high pitch of interest and excitement. Fortunately there were two of us, and we had the advantage, inestimable on so con-*



*fusing and difficult a terrain, of comparing observations. My husband collaborated in these impressions; if I could thank one by one all those, Russians and non-Russians, known and unknown, who helped me to see Russia, his name would still lead all the rest. We debated over every verst of the most debatable ground on earth, debated to no end, but we did agree that if we were explorers giving a name to that ground we should have to call it Russia rather than Bolshevism.*

*May I add that the scythe has been preferred to the sickle of the Soviet emblem as a symbol of the Russian field not only because I like the word better on a title page but because it is the scythe I associate with the wide flat swaths of the steppe. I see now lines of peasants returning from the harvest carrying on their shoulders long-handled scythes that look like bent bayonets bristling against the tawny evening sky. The hammer smashes, "demolishes the past," so they claim, rivets together the steel skeletons of the new gods of the machine. "But the sharp scythe falls," says the poet, "and the whole field cowers."*

*July, 1928.*



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THE HAMMER  
AND THE SCYTHE



“ ALL THE RUSSIAS ”

WHOEVER goes to Russia discovers Russia. Something never communicated, perhaps never communicable, has always brooded over that prostrate plain, two continents wide, whereon hundreds of dim peoples under little colored cupolas, like lost children with old painted toys, seem caught in passing and swallowed up in space.

Whoever goes to Russia discovers a different Russia. There is room for so many Russias between the Baltic and the Pacific, between the North Pole and the ice bastions of the Pamirs on the roof of Asia. “ Russia ” is only a Romanov generalization, an attempt of the Tsars to cover anonymity with a name and out of amorphous tribes to summon a nation. Autocrats of “ all the Rus-

sias " they bravely called themselves, but for three hundred years they huddled in Kremlins on the far edge of those indefinite Russias, with rumor and terror for their only ministers. The walls of the Kremlins were raised high enough to make a hill against the flat horizons, and inside the enclosure, cathedrals and palaces and barracks were crowded one upon another as if with gilt screens and friezes of bright domes to narrow the empty sky and domesticate majesty in the intolerable homelessness of the steppes.

Slowly but irresistibly, all the Russias diminish their Tsars. In two centuries they scaled down Peter the Great to Nicholas the Last, and though they are now the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, more loosely designated but more tightly federated than before, they still absorb and diminish everything — revolution, famine, communism, new and old economic policies, the voice of the world, the fantastic hopes of the traveler from the legendary lands of the West, and his equally fantastic fears.

Above all they diminish Europe. By chance the journey I made to Russia followed the familiar course of history. It started at Athens and traversed the length of Europe, through Rome, Vienna and Warsaw. One by one it found and left behind all the historic *clichés*. Once again there was no government in Greece. Venizelos, like how many forgotten leaders of the Athenians, was in retirement, pondering Thucydides in an olive grove in Crete and struggling to install in his country villa plumbing up to the standard set by the Minoans at Knossos four thousand years ago and since unknown in the Greek islands. In Rome a Cæsar from the Red Romagna had constructed aqueducts and a new Forum;



he was then recalling — so loudly that one heard the chariots on the ramp — that the *Via Egnatia* once led to Constantinople and the *Via Emilia* beyond the Alps. In Vienna somebody had made a roaring bonfire of the Palace of Justice, and sparks from the embers of revolution fizzled in the Ringstrasse like a spent skyrocket. Warsaw had dismissed its parliament, wherefore large numbers of short, argumentative gentlemen were obliged to make their speeches in the cafés.

But all that seemed something in transit, and trivial, as we pushed onward and eastward. Europe shriveled; it is so quickly overcome by the Slavs. They were already on the Adriatic, crowding Greece and Rome. Soon Czechoslovakia faded into Poland as indistinguishably as Poland now fades into Russia. On both sides of the frontier straggle the same level fields and the same morose villages. Uniforms change, the boots and manners of the customs inspectors are progressively less polished, but under different caps the faces are oddly alike, blunt, broad, carelessly modeled, the faces of a powerful and unfinished race. Two, three days of Slavs — and still for two weeks more the Slavic empire plods on over such levels before it overtakes China and debouches into the backwaters of America. Its sheer stretch is sobering. Beside it the rest of Europe and all the past, from Pericles to Cæsar and from Cæsar to the last of the Hapsburgs, dwindle to a margin, dog-eared and done for, on some vast unwritten page.

Blank spaces as big as these are vaguely ominous. They wait — wherever one turns, one sees them waiting — for headlines, for all the unknown headlines of the future. By the time the Polish train pulls up at

Niegorloye, and the Red Star suddenly rises out of the gray twilight of the steppe, the American begins to understand the tension and terror of the neighbors. A Latvian fellow-traveler, an official from just over the border, has prepared for the plunge into the unknown by making his will and filling a suitcase with ham sandwiches. We no longer laugh at him as some one announces from the next compartment that we are going "in."

For Russia becomes vaguer and darker the nearer you approach. No news of the Soviet Union is so grotesque as that heard in Riga, Warsaw and Bucharest. From the delta of the Danube to the delta of the Neva looms a fog of fear so thick that everything on both sides is muffled and distorted. Ten years after the most inevitable and most loudly reported revolution in history, its effects are less visible next door than they are five thousand miles away. They are little realized or understood anywhere. One still goes "in" as into another element. The fence of barbed wire between two striped barber poles which marks the beginning of Soviet territory is the most isolating and exclusive boundary in the world. Behind it goes on a war against property and an experiment in class government without precedent in human experience; though they have been going on for more than a decade, they are as poorly interpreted, as confused and confusing, in 1928 as they were in 1918. Observers come out either incoherent and self-contradictory, or impassioned and irrelevant. Some babble statistics, the easiest of all generalizations. Others look for Lenin in his mummy case and the naked bathers in the Moscow River. For a specimen of working con-

ditions under working-class rule, the classic example is always the factory of the Three Hills.

Before I crossed the frontier I could not understand why it was so difficult to get a clear and calm account of anything that was happening in a country where everything was happening. It seemed to me that at the beginning of the second decade of the Revolution it should be possible to obtain some definite idea of where, how, and whence the new leaven was working. Now I realize that all reports must be contradictory and incoherent. Only so can they be graphic. There are no "facts" that can be isolated and made to hang together. There is no order or consistency to convey.

The truth is that the Revolution has hardly begun in that vast vacuum. The first five years of militant communism, the period of the anarchic, unreported war that devastated Yaroslavl and Kiev and hundreds of dead villages from Siberia to the Crimea, are more easily imagined and interpreted than are the massive, unsynchronized movements, the interplay of action and reaction, the furies and the lethargies in Russia to-day. As well expect the centuries to move in unison and earthquakes to be neat as to look for correlation and rhythm in the march of all the Russias. They are so far apart in time as well as in space that when Communist propaganda reaches remote settlements it has the effect of introducing Karl Marx to Cain and Abel. Some communities, of course, propaganda has never reached at all. The Shapsougi, a tribe in the Caucasus Mountains, have been a going republic for more than a hundred years in spite of all the Tsars. Only last summer explorers from the Academy of Science at Leningrad discovered happy

colonies that had heard rumors of the succession of Nicholas II to the throne and no news since. There are ninety-nine different tribes in the Caucasian Federation alone. The first census of the whole Union reports 577 known peoples and 150 known languages.

Russia is all human society in embryo, a monstrous womb heavy with a civilization not yet ready for the boundaries of birth. It is in the disorder of creation; its upheavals are the slow spasms of parturition. The border is not only a frontier but the Frontier. Beyond is the dark forest nobody knows, the inhabitants least of all.

The Red customs officers who gathered about the counter in the long, shed-like room and shook out one by one the garments in my suitcase — finding them flimsy and foolish as they looked to me in that place — had the rude zest of youths doing something for the first time. They were suspicious and awkward and supernaturally solemn: they watched one another, I thought, as closely as they watched the few travelers. They took a book out of a bag as if it were a bomb. Unable to read it, they examined it gravely page by page, looking at the print as children look at pictures.

That was it; they *were* children. Russia is young! No one on the outside knows how young. It is primeval as the wilderness is primeval, not stagnant in a dead civilization like China and India, but uncouth and curious and potential — the young Occident more than the young Orient. The Slavs are the last barbarians, the Bronze Age smashing into the age of steel. The more one sees of them — the revolutionary oligarchy, the proletarian leaders in the towns, the peasants in the villages,

the whooping reformers in factories, offices and schools, all the solemn workers in the improvised laboratories of a thousand crude and cosmic experiments — the more gorgeously, recklessly infantile they seem.

So many things are clear if explained as manifestations of adolescence. Young Russia is abnormally excited over itself as innovator and as Messiah. It takes itself with deadly seriousness, it worships graphs and diagrams. Its faith in formulas, planning boards and all prospectuses rebounds from every discouragement. I refer now particularly to Moscow, where the new ruling class is concentrated, and where experimentation proceeds with the literalness, abstraction and self-absorption of the class room or the novitiate. No one can go to Moscow and escape the thrill of that under-graduate excitement. During two months I never heard any conversation that was not about Russia. Even foreigners when they meet harp forever on the same obsessing theme; they also are fascinated by daily issues of new extras to the Book of Genesis. "Must you stay?" some one asked a young diplomat uttering one evening the usual lamentations of diplomats who are marooned in the Soviet capital. "No," he admitted. "I have been offered another post. But everything outside is dull after this. The rest of the world is so — old!"

Civilizations were born and died on the Great Plain, Cimmerian, Scythian, Greek and Goth; they have hardly left a wrinkle. Names like Vladimir of Kiev and Yaroslav of Novgorod flash out of the darkness of the Middle Age, and a few painted walls and lonely monuments recall that the Slavs were as mature as their Western neighbors before the steppes were overrun by Ghenghis Khan



and the Golden Horde. But "Russia," with its Tartar birthmark, did not really begin until the Pilgrims were at Plymouth Rock. Neither that date, however, nor the fact that as a political entity it is older than the United States, and freed the serfs quite as soon as we freed the slaves, gives any idea of its essential primitiveness. The delighted discoverer in old churches of frescoes as naïve and charming as Italian primitives also discovers that the Russian Ciambues painted in the time of Titian; but he would be wrong to conclude therefore that Russia is only a few centuries behind the rest of Europe. Beyond the European borderlands the steppe lies as unawakened as was the American prairie before the Covered Wagon, as ignorant of past civilizations as were the Sioux Indians of the migrations of the Mound Builders.

All attempts to compare Russia with anything but itself are fruitless. The analogy between the French and the Russian revolutions breaks down because Russia in 1917 was so much younger than France in 1789. Both upheavals, of course, had the features common to all revolutions. "From this dough come Robespierres," said Plechanov of Lenin, and Trotsky has more than once been recognized as the Russian Danton. Each revolution had its prologue of military defeat and inept despotism, its Reign of Terror, its decisive rising of peasants famished for land, its attack upon the national religion, its deification of other gods, Reason or Labor, its ardent promulgation of a new doctrine. Revolutionary Russia delights to think of itself as the inheritor of the French and the apotheosis of all revolutions. Characteristically its first impulse after the revolt was to run to look at itself in the French mirror. Within a week of the uprising

the entire stocks of books on the French Revolution were sold out in all the Russian book shops. "Thermidor" was the word oftenest on the lips of the Opposition during the long struggle between Trotsky and Stalin for the power of Lenin. When the comrades grow dejected over the obstinate ostracism of capitalist governments, they are consoled by the reminder that revolutionary France was twenty years in re-establishing relations with the rest of Europe.

But France at the end of the eighteenth century was a mature and modern state compared to Russia at the beginning of the twentieth. The doctrine of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is imposed on a society far more elemental than that educated by Rousseau and the Encyclopedists to desire Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The French bourgeoisie prepared the Revolution and profited by it; the Russian intelligentsia who sowed the seed of revolt have no part in the harvest. Too young even to compose its own Bill of Rights, Russia rose to a revolution made in Germany, burst into hymns of emancipation that had first to be translated, and is rehearsed in the imported dogmas of proletarianism as Christian infants are drilled in the definitions of the Little Catechism. In both cases the catechumens are supposed to understand when they grow up the abstractions they repeat by rote as children.

Inside Russia, however, the form and context of the revolutionary creed appear of minor importance. Marx was rejected in the only country that was prepared for him. His surprising triumph across the Baltic, in a peasant empire less ready for a proletarian dictatorship than any area of the world except the Far East, is for that



very reason provisional. Whether or not Russia will deport Marx when it learns to understand him, it is certain that his teaching, as Russianized first by Lenin and ever since by Russia, will in a few years be unrecognizable. His statue is already incongruous among the blue blouses of Russian Main Streets. I remember particularly the one at Kiev, because I was startled by the apparition in Vorolsky Street of a prim old gentleman tightly buttoned up in a frock coat. Karl Marx, indeed, is about the only man left in the Soviet Union who looks like a bourgeois.

Marxist or not, Communist or not, matters little; Russia is the Prometheus making the revolutionary drama Promethean. If the dictatorship of the proletariat had been realized in Germany, or translated into Italian, it would have been at once more important as an experiment in government and less important as a revolution than it is when inflated by the immensity, and mocked by the immaturity of Russia. The outside world pronounces Red Russia with the emphasis on the Red; inside, Russia soon teaches you to change the accent. Even the word "red" has not in Russian the same meaning that has been attached to it elsewhere. To the Slav red signifies splendor, handsomeness. The great place in the heart of Moscow has always been the Red Square; it means literally the Fine Square. The Romanov color was red. In the popular sense of grandeur and gorgeousness old Russia was "redder" than the new.

It is easy to say that what prevails to-day in this Russia is not communism. It is not, and the Communists in command are the first to insist that it is not. They are

bitter about it, the mystic materialists and utopian utilitarians who preach the pure gospel with desperate sincerity to a congregation of backsliders and heretics. They say they are only struggling — struggling against human nature in general, specifically against the implacable human nature of 100,000,000 peasants — to enforce conditions favorable to the application of communism. In the first delirious days of the Revolution, the days of "militant" communism, the trains and the trams were declared the property of the people, and all the people were entitled to ride free. The result was that railway coaches and street cars were unable to move, they were so overwhelmed and battered by the mob that it was impossible for any one to go anywhere. It took the organizing genius and despotic power of Dzerzhinsky, former head of the Cheka, to rebuild and reorganize the transportation system after the orgy of pure communism. Still abominably over-crowded, the trains are now punctual and well-managed; they still belong to the people, but railway fares somewhat restrain the passionate itineracy of their owners. Such early experiences, as well as the constantly recurrent agricultural and economic crises, are only taken to prove, however, that a society of communists must somehow be created before a communist state can be made to function. The Communists believe that by education they will eventually develop such a society. They make compromises with reality, but they remain fervent believers in the theory. It becomes more a faith as it becomes less a fact.

With all the compromises, I am not sure that it does become less a fact. Just now the Soviet government is facing the most serious crisis it has encountered since

Lenin made the desperate compromise of the New Economic Policy. Dissension within the ruling Party, clashes between that party and the government on foreign policies, the spasmodic concessions and coercions necessary to overcome the periodic balkiness of the farmers, the stiffening of the other powers of the world against the pretensions of this power — all these factors pile together to make the present a heavy moment for the rulers of Soviet Russia. The strain of the dictatorship, always very great, is manifest in the tenser atmosphere of the Kremlin and the tightening of discipline on all fronts.

Yet what is the cause of most of these tensions but the determination of the Communists to return to a more consistent application of the original doctrine? To-day there is more state socialism, or state capitalism, than there has been at any time since concessions were first made to private business. The private trader and private manufacturer are being rapidly squeezed out in favor of the state enterprises and the co-operatives. The new scheme for a Jewish agricultural state in Siberia and the startling drop since 1927 of the number of private merchants indicate the languishing state of private trade, which is subject to so many taxes and restrictions and is so closely supervised that few any longer have the hardihood to engage in it. The same "cat and mouse" method, a policy of alternate advances and retreats, is applied to the farm, the largest of all private businesses, with the object of preventing any farmer from accumulating wealth. These vacillations account for many of the bewilderingments and discontents the traveler encounters, and explain the universal bootlegging in all the com-

modities of life. But what they most clearly demonstrate is that all concessions are merely strategic. There is no surrender in the sleepless battle to realize communism.

So long as the Communist Party prevails as a government, the battle is not lost. It does prevail. No one on the ground can doubt that as a government it is as strongly entrenched and as stable as any in the world. Nothing at present predictable can upset it. It prevails because it reigns over vague masses of undeveloped people accustomed to enduring government as they endure the weather, and because the new ruling caste — about the same size in proportion to the population as the oligarchy it displaces, — follows closely the governing technic of its predecessor. In Russia it is impossible to avoid anachronisms. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat sets out to destroy the past with weapons invented by Ivan the Terrible. It clings tenaciously to the most ancient superstition in the world, — the superstition of Terror. Unchanged among all the changes are the eternal vigilance and power of the political police. A regime manned by exiles and prison graduates has learned only one form of government and has never heard of any place for opposition except Siberia.

Unchanged, too, is that strange being, never wholly tamed, whose destructive and discursive genius is appeased by revolt. Old wine in new bottles is his present potion. One reason why a million Communists are able to keep on ruling a non-communistic population of 147,000,000 is because the Soviet system attracts the Slav. Private possession means less to his unanchored mind than it means to other peoples. The crowding,

the promiscuity, the disorder, the bureaucracy imputed as evils of the Bolshevik regime are conditions the Slav has always created for himself. In the biggest houses Russian families congregate in the smallest room. They hate privacy. It is not a paradox to say that they like a crowd to be alone in.

They love talk, and government by discussion is the Soviet formula. Every factory, village, trade, profession and neighborhood has its own Soviet, and every Soviet is a debating society. The debate gets nowhere and has no effect, since each Soviet is absolutely controlled by its one or two Communist members, the "cells" by which a small party honeycombs its empire. Even the ballot represents no power; it is merely a public and closely watched showing of hands. But if a Russian can talk he does not care who acts. Each local Soviet drains into some larger council, and thus the stream of talk goes on and on until it empties in the central congress, the supreme talking body of the Union.

They love drama, and communism expresses itself to the Russian as drama and experiment. He rejects its economic rigidity, its invasion of his farm and of his churches, its pretensions to his soul, but he would not willingly lose its excitements and innovations, the sharp pleasure he gets out of defiance to the established order of the world. He is a Slav, the revolutionary among the races, and he would rather watch analytically the failure of a great revolutionary idea than prosper and be comfortable in the safe success of tried formulas. Fatalistic and fanatic, he counts the cost and cruelty of revolution as nothing compared to the brilliant flourish of a theory.

Thus behind the Bolshevik is the Russian. And be-

hind them both looms Russia. All other views of the new theories in action are frivolous unless they are ranged against the background into which they eventually fade. "Russia," said Byely, in his symbolic novel, "The Silver Dove," published as long ago as 1910, "is the rock on which theories are being cracked, science is turned into dust, and even life itself is burned out."



THE CAPITAL OF THE PROLETARIAT

THE FIRST day in the streets of Moscow is an exciting initiation into the proletarian world. One learns more about the new Russia in that first plunge than one ever learns afterward. I took off from the battered doorway of the Grand Hotel, one of several frowsy entrances placed at intervals under ugly iron porches in a four-storied brick front two blocks long. It is vaguely like an old hotel I saw once at Niagara Falls, and the heavy gabled red brick building opposite, across the wide cobbled Square of the Revolution, might also have been American of the same epoch, a high school, say, in Cincinnati. This was the Second Dom, or House, of the Moscow Soviet. Its twin is beside it, the Historical Museum,

and the two are joined by a low double arch, in the middle of which is imbedded like a bright barnacle the star-sprinkled indigo cupola of the shrine of the Iberian Virgin.

In the middle of the square is a station for half the tramways in Moscow. The cars come clanging back and forth, numbered and over-loaded like street cars everywhere. I kept glancing at them and the red brick fronts for reassurance, because when I looked at the people jostling by in all directions I felt as lost and strange as do the newly dead, no doubt, when they set forth for their first walk in the streets of the hereafter.

The people were all alike; they seemed duplicated. They wore a kind of worker's uniform. Most of them were without hats or stockings and their shoes were poor and shapeless. They were sturdy, neither bright nor sad, oddly expressionless, indeed, and quiet. It was singular to see so many people and hear so little sound. With round heads shaven bald, fair, blank faces, and linen blouses gathered at the neck, the men looked a little like tall babies; babies carrying brief cases. Not one but swung a brief case in addition to his other bundles. I don't know why brief cases are always part of the regular equipment; it may be that in a community without any private space the citizen finds it desirable to carry his office and his private papers wherever he goes. The women, bareheaded, in coarse cotton dresses, and laden, too, with bundles, were hardly more differentiated; perhaps I imagined that they regarded me more sullenly than the men.

A couple of moth-eaten droshkies were tilted in the deep cobbled gutters, and one or two decadent taxis and a truck rattled by at high speed. The absence of traffic



noises made more marked the silence of the pedestrians. Every one walked as if walking alone. The quiet struck me most, and after that, reflected in impassive eyes, my own conspicuousness. In the shabbiest of "outside clothes," the stranger feels overdressed in Russia. He is embarrassed to be different in a world in which such differences are treacherous and a little shameful. Later I grew accustomed to being accosted in the streets by women begging to know where they could duplicate an old American tailored suit or a pair of shoes bought in a Balkan town, but at first all the stares seemed hostile, and I felt despised and despicable — a bourgeoisie, or even worse than that, a profiteer of the "Nep," wearing the un-social silk of private enterprise. For clothes here, I saw, if something less, were also something more than wearing apparel. They were assertions and proofs of proletarianism. In America we all try to dress like capitalists, and in Russia they all try to dress like workers. Their working clothes are far more expensive than our capitalistic garments. They are the most expensive clothes in the world. I never could afford the sleazy cotton stockings I bought in Moscow for three dollars and a half a pair. My husband could not buy for any price a number eleven sock; the proletarian foot is supposed to stop at a reasonable standard length. In Moscow they wear what they can get, and pay what they must, but the psychological suggestion of working clothes as the high fashion in clothes is so powerful, on wearer and beholder, that I wondered if such clothes anywhere would not have the effect of a revolution.

I crossed the street and through the squat arches entered the huge quadrangle which the Communists have

made once more, as it was in the beginning, the center of Russia. The Red Square looks like that; at the same time an autocrat and a peasant of a square, a width of the steppe cobbled down and enclosed on one side by the dreary white arcades of the thousand shops of the "Gum," once the longest department store in the world and now the equally long but more casual co-operative, and on the other by the red wall of the startling citadel that knocks cold and pale Carcassonne, the Tower of London and all other fortresses and walled cities where-soever. The Cathedral of St. Basil, at the far end of the Square, a good kilometre away, is magic and madness. A French builder at Beauvais once spun the Gothic into the flamboyant light-headedness of which it died. St. Basil's is the fatal apoplexy of the architectural genius of old Russia. The jewelled caps and caftans twisted on top of its spiral turrets are the last excesses of that greed for form in a formless landscape which scattered cupolas of every shape and color over the Great Plain. The Kremlin satisfies a lordlier appetite; it is the parade of a great despotism. Built by Italian architects for Ivan III in 1495, it bears no mark either of Italy or of age. Its ruddy battlements are singularly unfaded, and only Russia could inspire that powerful profile, dissonant and strangely moving as the clash of bronze bells in the Ivan tower. From the tips of the gate towers and the domes of all the churches still flash the black double eagles of the Tsars and the golden double crosses of the Orthodox Church. Under the crowns and the crosses the Commissars of the People are now secluded. Near the main gate — the Gate of Salvation — not far from the low turret erected by Ivan the Terrible as a

grand-stand seat for the enjoyment of executions in the square, stands the first tomb and altar of the newest dynasty.

What "rulers of all the Russias" could resist the Kremlin? The visitor cannot, even while he sees that Lenin's little wooden pyramid is pushing it into a back-ground, using the red wall as a curtain for another show. And neither he nor they can withstand the strong glamour of this slattern capital, though never again, except in odd moments of distraction, will he be able to see it as he sees it in this first glance: the Mother Moscow of the folk tales, wanton and golden-crowned, gathering all the villages of the steppe into one enormous village and all the Russias into one sumptuous, brutal and disordered caravansary. Moscow is of the plain, a horizontal town. It runs to width as New York runs to height — wide avenues, wide buildings, wide tracks, wide railway stations, thirteen of them, wide compounds for old monasteries and Boyar manor houses. The Red Square flanks a still bigger place, the mammoth Square of the Revolution, and these enormous central spaces lead to others, to two rings of girdling boulevards replacing outgrown walls, to unkempt parks and wandering cobbled streets as broad as fields. Upon all the wide margins hang low domes and belfries, the many-colored cupolas of four hundred churches, as many as in Rome, though each year sees a few knocked down. Above the drab streets the sky is bright with bulbous silhouettes; one moves between the vistas of a fairy tale and the scenes of "A Night's Lodging" and hardly knows where is realism and where is fantasy.

All alike is now background. What one see in Moscow to-day is only people, crowding, insistent, obtrusive people — the people at last in possession of the earth. Other capitals manage to triumph over their congestion, New York by towering above it, Paris by grace, London by that passive resistance called British phlegm, but Moscow is overwhelmed — is bruised, battered and knocked out — by the imperial populace. Lenin, when he moved from Petersburg in 1918, returned to the crossroads where Russia began. He returned to the oldest trading post between central Asia and central Europe, to the "holy city," the "third Rome," to establish in the citadel of tradition the first Capital of the Proletariat. Not a world capital only, but more: as the seat of the Third International and the general headquarters of the revolutionary movement among workers everywhere, the capital of the world.

More than revolution would have to break upon this sprawling town to turn it cosmopolitan or even metropolitan; more than a few hundred slant-eyed students parading under the Chinese Wall, or delegations of sight-seeing workers trickling in from other countries, or deported internationalists established in the Luxe Hotel as carefully guarded guests of the Communist Party. No city is less international than Moscow. But it is self-consciously and ostentatiously proletarian. The crowd is now Tsar, or thinks it is, and is so overpowering that after the first moment one sees nothing in the Red Square but the march of the workers advancing. It is the daily parade ground for reviews of Red Army troops, drills of Young Communists, mass meetings to celebrate some revolutionary

holiday, children singing and waving red flags. The newest ruling class mobilizes before the most dramatic citadel in the world, and the Kremlin fades before a shouting multitude of Tsars.

When I first saw it the multitude happened to be gathering in a queue. All over Russia twisted lines of docile people are forever waiting for something; they must be the most patient people in the world. The capital of the proletariat is a city of queues. One waits daily in the Red Square for the opening of the tomb of Lenin. Another, a stone's throw away, trails up the steps to the blue-domed chapel at the gate. All day long the incense burned before the most venerated ikon of the old religion rises under the sign that declares religion to be the opium of the people, and every evening, through the arches under that sign, pass the pilgrims on their way to visit the embalmed idol of the Communist faith. The famous inscription has become a kind of Gallic commentary on a war that started out to destroy all superstitions and ends by setting up beside an indifferent dark Madonna the most realistic god and altar in the world. The poor and broken flock to one shrine. They burn tapers of beeswax and are blessed. On the steps outside droop beggars, among them two forlorn old priests in ragged gray robes. The door to the other altar is guarded by files of immobile soldiers. Solemn processions trudge between them, descend a short stair, pass without pause around the glass case in the draped vault wherein lies Lenin, slightly uplifted, and ascend on the other side. Vladimir Ilyitch looks less impassive than his visitors; he is startlingly life-like in his strange



audience chamber. Those who flout immortality will not let him die!

Nearby a queue of women besieged a state shop demanding sugar. The lines seeking goods, — flour, sugar, cloth, manufactured articles of every-day necessity, — are the longest and commonest of all the queues. They are not bread lines. They are waiting to pay for what they need; often they pay premiums to the private traders who can supply the scarce commodities. In general, however, shortage of goods is so chronic that ability to pay is no guarantee that one may not stand in line all day in vain. Even as I looked the door slammed on the sugar line. The stock was exhausted. Without any comment or complaint the women slowly dispersed. One, too tired to walk, sank down on the steps and immediately slept.

I have seen many statistics on production in Russia, but none quite so literal and impressive as the queues. I have also seen statistics recording the spectacular decline of private trade since the high peak of 1923. There is no doubt that large-scale business of all kinds, retail, wholesale and manufacturing, is more and more absorbed by the state trusts and by the ever enlarging network of co-operative enterprises, maintained by and for large groups, such as trade unions, neighborhoods, villages, various categories of employes. The word "Kommyhap," meaning communal, or co-operative, appears in large letters over half the doors in Moscow. It is the first Russian word one learns. Another is "artel," a form of co-operative business popular in the old days in Russia and even more favored to-day. The artel seems to be a kind of working partnership in

which any small number of persons may engage provided all the labor is performed by the partners and no one is hired for a wage. Many restaurants, small stores, repair shops and little factories are *artels*. But the stranger's first survey gives him the impression that all these communal undertakings are only subsidiary to the commerce in the streets. I was unable to get any satisfactory figures on the extent of street trading, but as I passed out of the Red Square and into the adjoining thoroughfares I walked for what seemed like miles through a continuous market-place. The sidewalks were lined with vendors of every conceivable kind of merchandise. They stood in close formation, elbow to elbow, holding out their wares. Sometimes so many in a rank offered the same article—I recall a solid block of aprons, for example, aprons of exactly the same lurid calico, a frightful scalloped valance of aprons—that it was difficult to believe that one master merchant had not farmed out a concession to hundreds of hirelings. The most unlikely things were sold: rouge to barefoot girls, glass beads to women in cotton slips, underwear, chairs, salted cucumbers and slices of watermelon. The fruits were plentiful and tempting, but when I stopped to buy some peaches, at twenty-five cents each, the pedlar and his enormous tray suddenly disappeared as completely as the vanishing gentleman of a conjuror's trick. A warning of the approach of a policeman had passed down the line and the line dissolved. The vendors are required to have licenses; this one was among the hundreds who had none.

There must be thousands of such private traders in Moscow, with and without permits. Never since all the

traders of the Near East were dumped into Athens after the deportations from Turkey have I seen so much and so many varieties of sidewalk trafficking. The same phenomenon is visible in every town and village in the Soviet Union. The entire population seems engaged in this kind of private business. They sell everything there is to sell and they sell at all hours; at two o'clock in the morning it is easy to satisfy a whim for a string of imitation pearls, a cucumber, a cigarette, or a brief case. The strongest competitor of a shop-keeping government is not even obliged to keep union hours.

The windows of the government shops in the "Gum" arcades and in the Petrovka, once the fashionable shopping street, were dusty and neglected; where there is no competition customers are not enticed by displays outside or attention within. The curious jumbles of goods suggested rummage sales or old-fashioned general stores. They were mostly the shoddy and ugly things — pink soap, clocks, perfumes, paper suitcases, incredible clothes — first desired by people who have never had anything. One window was crowded with little dolls; they were proletarian dolls, dressed like the passers-by. Many exhibited shabby stocks salvaged from store-rooms of the past, the tarnished silver plate and long pointed shoes of some pre-war epoch. Only the provision shops were fresh and attractive. Amid a tastelessness so universal that it was almost a design, as perhaps it was, fruits, vegetables, sausages, chocolates, foods in general, were arranged with care and relish. Equally crisp and constantly renewed were piles of pencils and blank books. While the abacus is still the universal adding machine for the most futuristic calculations, too soon



one discovers that a new order cannot be planned without an enormous amount of memoranda, addenda, notation, book-keeping and all kinds of tabulation. It is easy to believe that the one consistently profitable concession is the American monopoly of the manufacture of lead pencils.

In the windows of the book shops, run by the state, stocked only with books printed or imported by the state — what a monopoly is that in this young Russia, so eager to learn, so plastic to teach! — were featured two kinds of books. First, studies of communism, propaganda literature of every form and endless variety; multiplying commentaries, more and more hair-splitting, on the infallible scriptures of Marx and Lenin; new Economic Histories, de-bunked biographies, all the *tours de force* of innovators who in ten years have had not only to plan the future but to rearrange the past. And second, swamping even the literature of the revolution, technical books, studies of science and industry. Many of these are American, mostly pirated, since to the Communist ownership in ideas is as viciously capitalistic as ownership in cash registers. The word for industrialization in Russia is Americanization, and the passion to Ford-ize the Soviet Union is even stronger than the passion to communize it.

The vast cafés behind glass walls that reveal other Slavic populations in eternal conversation over tea and coffee, as in Warsaw, Prague and Belgrade, do not exist in Moscow. I saw no cafés at all, or any other place, unless the workers' clubs, wherein the relaxed Muscovite could satisfy his famous thirst for tea and self-expression. There is no evidence that he ever relaxes. The restaurants

had a furtive and comfortless air. Even the vegetarian restaurants, where the new intelligentsia go to escape the heavy meat menus served in other eating places, are usually to be found hidden away in gloomy basements. In the universal system of control applied to Russian employees, none of whom is allowed to handle money unless checked by another, the food is paid for before it is consumed. Consumed is the word; meals are devoured in silence and disorder. On a street off the Petrovka, past the big window displaying the ribald posters of the "Anti-God" society, three or four pastry shops have tiny back rooms in which a few sybarites secretly indulge in hot chocolate with whipped cream and very sweet cakes. But though they look subtly un-proletarian, these gourmands, they too take their pleasure sadly, and alone.

Windows in all cities are mirrors, and nowhere have I seen so many broken, dust-clouded, unshaded windows. More than anything else, I think, the unwashed windows and the unswept doorways, so sharply lighted by the clear, clean air, give to the city its squalid look of dilapidation and neglect. I never got used either to the blurred panes, as of disused and empty rooms, or to the reek of crowded life behind them. Around the Kremlin walls and in the center of the encircling boulevards are pleasant, well-kept gardens, always filled on summer days and nights — all night — with homeless-looking people. In the green rectangles of the Square of the Revolution and in front of the stark gray cube of the Lenin Institute, bright parterres of flowers are carefully tended. But on the contiguous streets the houses bulge with tenants, are scarred and sagging from

the weight of life they carry, so that every quarter looks like a slum. If, to-morrow, the population of New York could be reshuffled, if the lower East Side were moved into Park Avenue, and the ten-room apartments occupied by two persons were divided among ten families who before had been living two families to a room, with the same population Manhattan Island would look more crowded and untidy than it does to-day. Moscow has done this and has also more than doubled its population in the past ten years without adding appreciably to its housing space. The whole Union converges on the capital; it is jammed not only with vast new armies of government employes but also with thousands who seek the capital just to enjoy the thrill and ferment of change and experiment. "But everything is happening here!" protested one among many jobless youths when asked why he did not seek work elsewhere.

Through the dirty windows is visible the whole uncensored pageant of proletarian life. Moscow is crowded beyond decency. There is no space for reticence. The people live publicly, whole families packed in one room in the interstices between beds and ill-assorted furniture. A dozen families use the same kitchen, the same water tap, the same bath, when there is a bath; they live in the unshared and unpartitioned state which is the most elemental form of communism, the communism of the barracks. Such communism is not intended by the Communists; it is unavoidable and, they hope, temporary. The wear and tear of communal living, however, and the neglect inseparable from a common ownership which means no ownership, have exaggerated the housing crisis by making many buildings uninhabitable. The passer-by

is immediately sensible of the corrosion of this congestion and this carelessness. The Russian, with his uncanny power of abstracting himself from material surroundings, and with no standard of comparison, seems unconscious of the squalor in which he lives. He resists its demoralization better than weaker and less stoic races, but the strain of constant herding, the pitiless lack of privacy, does affect his nerves; when his glum patience snaps, something savage and hysterical breaks through.

I stepped into the doorway of a church to watch a company of Red soldiers swing by. They marched briskly, looking neither right nor left, singing the "International," and as they passed the measure of the workers' hymn mingled for a moment with the deep voice of the chanting priest. A beggar, out of innumerable beggars, asked for an alms in French. A street waif, out of innumerable street waifs, thrust up a claw-like black hand and snatched the coin from my fingers, but a workman sprang down from a ladder, chased the boy and came back laughing to restore the dole to the old aristocrat. The hoofs of the strong Russian horses beat a tattoo upon the cobblestones. A brand new motor bus lurched around the corner and knocked down an old man in the crowd. Nobody paid any attention. He lay in a pool of blood while the crowd surged on, curiously callous and self-absorbed.

Here was a world without make-up. The "upper crust" was gone. Everything that had been on top was at the bottom and everything that had been at the bottom was on top. If the success of a revolution is to be

judged by the completeness of its destruction of an old social order, and the completeness of that destruction is to be read in the revelations of the streets, then the Russian Revolution is the most successful in history. Other upheavals have destroyed a form of government or a political philosophy, but this has destroyed a whole pattern of life. Not a trace remains of the old surface that here, as elsewhere, no doubt, spread its smooth lacquer over the rough stuff underneath. Not a sign survives of those who built these churches, planned these squares, admired these classic nineteenth century porticoes, occupied these exotic Southern Colonial mansions, ordered these banal business blocks — “giants of six and seven stories,” the Soviet guide book calls them. Even their manners and their gestures are forgotten. Frowned upon by the new order as “bourzhui” artifices, vestiges of servility, amenities seem not so much abolished as never acquired. That is the point of incandescence in the whole illumination; in this inverted world it is startlingly clear that the class on top, whatever it is, controls the standard and form of the civilization it covers. Here the class to live up to is the working class, and the desires of that class establish what things are desirable. For the individual, at least, there is no pretense and no competition, social or economic. The movement of this mass, palpable as the rush of a river stirred by the wind, is not the agitation of individuals racing one against another, as in other societies, but a movement of the whole. The effect on the observer is of something indefinably brutal — a sense of constant exposure to the untempered cruelty and animal surge of life — and at the same time liberating and exhilarating,



a release from a load of oppressive futilities. It is the effect of an army on the march, concentrated on keeping step — more concentrated than any crowd I have ever seen — and free as soldiers are from the everlasting goad to get ahead.

The romantic passion of this Russia is for realism. It strives to break the matrix of the past with almost fantastic antitheses. The blocks of gray concrete planted at distant intervals among the rococo cupolas and tarnished spires are grotesque in their inflexible determination to create a Socialist architecture. They reject color and ornament as they reject other amenities. Even architectural manners must not be bourgeois. The Lenin Institute, a black rectangle near the pillared front of the Moscow Soviet, looks strangely like a coffin. The newspaper, *Izvestia* (The News), organ of the government, rears a glass and iron ladder suggestive of a news sheet ruled into columns with the type left out. The headquarters of the "Mostorg" (Moscow Trading Trust) and the "Arcos," still in commercial relations with Great Britain in spite of the diplomatic break, are flat-roofed, efficient, box-like structures, the perfect examples of how business-like business ought to be. The Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs is the only new edifice that dares a curve; it sweeps around a corner with a fine cubist flourish. None of the new buildings is more than eight stories high and none is very original. They are late German or American factory architecture, chiefly interesting because they alone on the jumbled sky-line sketch the first outline of the ideal proletarian city. I saw hardly more than a dozen all told and most of those were brick apartment houses in process of

erection by trade unions to supply living quarters for their members.

All the government offices utilize whatever buildings they found available when the capital moved to Moscow. Since all property came into government possession in the Revolution, and most businesses were abolished, the commissariats are generally housed in commercial blocks. The Foreign Office crowds an office building at the head of the Kusnetsky Most and the O. G. P. U., or political police bureau, imparts an air mysterious and sinister to the commonplace headquarters of an old insurance company on the Lubyanka. The central offices of the Trade Unions open out of the interminable dark corridors of what must have been the hugest foundling asylum in the world. Its white front faces the Moscow River beyond the Chinese Wall. Behind it are shaded, straggling streets with broken walls that must once have been quiet backwaters, perhaps the retreat of some shabby fringe of a middle class. Now they teem as all streets teem. In one of them groups of new foundlings, sun-burnt little codgers in cotton shorts, and nothing else, were being herded toward the river.

Not a trace remains of the old order, I have said, and it is true; yet on Sunday mornings all the bells of Moscow clang as they have always clanged. Brazen and hoarse, like a dirge and like the clash of ancient battle, the church bells shake their strange discordance over the throbbing streets. Moscow has always spoken by the bronze and silver tongues of bells. The biggest of all bells are hers; from within the Kremlin, the mother bell

of Russia still sounds the deep note on Easter Eve that releases all the waiting chimes. Last year it broke suddenly upon a meeting of the Central Executive Committee in St. Andrew's Hall, and some old instinct, I was told, brought the assembled Communists to their feet. "Comrades, it is Easter," said one Commissar of the People. "We all have families who may wish to celebrate. Let us go home." Probably the story is not true, but it is not unlikely in a capital where every day the chime in the belfry of the Gate of Salvation peals out the "International" at the same hour that the call to mass is sounded from three hundred other belfries. And Sunday morning the bells beat like grave tom-toms until all the air vibrates with the rhythms of Stravinsky.

They do not beat in vain. The faithful file into the open doors of the churches. They are mostly the old, it is true, but the old so invariably accompanied by children that the congregations are oddly anomalous gatherings of the oldest and youngest generations. Few go to the great Cathedral of the Redeemer, massive and glittering on the river bank, which was built to celebrate the retreat of Napoleon and is now turned over to the "Living Church." The little churches are more popular. A faded pink chapel near the Smolensky Square was pointed out by my guide as "the aristocratic church." "Regard our first families," he said. "You will see no workers' blouses here." The worshippers were like shadows on the walls, so wraith-like that it was startling to hear their deep voices in the chant. The women wore long, bedraggled dresses from another life and two of the men, standing erect with little baskets in their hands, were in ragged soldiers' coats, buttoned up tight on a hot



summer day. All carried baskets or odd-shaped little parcels. They were on their way to the Smolensky Market, where on Sunday mornings all the unlicensed pedlars are permitted to hawk their wares in the most amazing rummage sale in the world.

Everyone goes to the Smolensky Market. Dealers and nepmen, diplomats and all the stray foreigners in Moscow are to be met somewhere in the jostling lanes wherein the daily barter of the streets reaches its delirious, uncensored height — wherein old Russia is for sale. After an earthquake one is more struck by what remains intact than by what has been destroyed. So in Moscow the observer is constantly astonished by the odd things that survive the old order — tips, the porter to carry your bag while you walk empty-handed, the gambling casino operated by the government, the sleek Rolls-Royces of the Kremlin officials, the restaurants for the rich and the poor, the hard and soft places in the trains, the excessive number of perfume shops. But none of these anachronisms was ever so suggestive as the frenzy for trade and barter, the general passion for acquisition and possession, manifest in the furious proletarian bargaining for useless things animating the Smolensky Square on Sunday mornings. I saw workers' blouses haggling with threadbare velvet for broken miniatures, pieces of yellowed ermine, silver sugar tongs, monogrammed seals, a child's garnet ring.

The ghosts of proletarian Moscow haunt the Smolensky Market. Survivors of the old ruling classes stand along the edges of the crowds holding out the last of their great possessions — now such defenses against starvation as a bit of lace, an ivory umbrella handle, a

pair of sidecombs. They are haggard and spectral figures, unendurably tragic because their misery receives neither alleviation nor pity. The new upper class has no mercy on the new lower classes. They are frankly discriminated against in the courts, in the schools, by the housing committees, in the employment bureaus. Yet I could not help reflecting that the pedlars of the remnants of old Russia could do a brisk and profitable business if they had more to sell. The chattels of aristocracy, if cheap enough, are inordinately coveted by the conquering proletariat.

Shadows none the less are these left-overs. They are not barnacles that cling forever, like the tipping system and the lust for possession, barnacles that no cataclysm can shake off. The human spectres are fast fading from the scene. They take the dark sides of streets, the back doors of houses, asking no more than to be ignored and forgotten. Typical of a whole terrorized class is the woman of the old noblesse who begged only that the police be not notified when she was assaulted and robbed of her only coat and an old gold chain; or the young man I knew who was afraid to inquire for a sick friend because that friend was known as a former bourgeois. They all have the same dread of attracting the attention of the authorities. The foreigner with introductions to members of the old owning classes never presents them after he learns how embarrassing such introductions may be to the recipients. "Counter-revolution" is a very elastic term; arrests have been made on such charges as "unconscious espionage," "helping the world bourgeoisie," or, in times of suspicion, on no charge at all. The terror is so near and actual that in Moscow, at least, it is next to impossible to induce anyone not an official to

speak to a foreigner on any subject whatever. The officials themselves are professional revolutionaries to whom exile and imprisonment are the commonplace of life. They speak frankly and callously of terrorism as a calculated policy the success of which in discouraging opposition they learned from their own experience under the old regime. The vivid self-assertion and freedom of the proletarians are darkly underlined by the terrible meekness of the suppressed.

The foreigner himself, on the contrary, has no sense of being under surveillance. He goes to Russia expecting to be watched and restricted, to see nothing he is not shown, and to go nowhere without permission. He has heard that every hotel servant is a spy and that all walls have ears. If he makes his first tentative contacts through the Foreign Office (the Narkomindel) or the Bureau of Cultural Relations (the Vox), as all travelers must, he listens with dismay to their enthusiastic and thorough-going plans for the complete disposal of his time. He despairs of being able to evade chaperonage.

He soon learns that in Russia he need have little fear that a program will ever go any farther. Three separate programs, each starting all over again from the beginning, were made for us on three separate days by three separate officials of the Vox, all equally amiable, eager and intelligent, and all speaking English with the accent of New York. We never heard any more of any of them. After that we were quite free to get our own interpreters and go where we pleased. We made several trips into the country, alone or with friends, went unexpected into all sorts of places and never ran into any bars any-

where, or anything else except the rough and naïve kindness the stranger usually receives from Russians in general. Unless we had to go to hotels, where passports are always collected, we could wander unquestioned all over the Union. Contrary to the experience of many foreigners, who report that they never spoke to a Bolshevik functionary unless another listened to the conversation, I had dozens of interviews with officials ranging from the President of the Union to the head of a village Soviet and only in two cases was any third person present except my own interpreter.

If the hotel employes are spies they are very poor spies, unworthy of Russia's great spying tradition. The rulers of to-day are at a disadvantage compared to their predecessors because they are of the class that knows no languages. The famous Russian linguists are gone; now there are not enough interpreters to supply the government offices. In the universities language teachers are even scarcer than engineering specialists. From one end of the Union to the other it is rare to find any language but Russian, except among the Jews who have returned from the United States or Germany. After seeking vainly in the biggest Moscow hotel for a waiter who understood enough words in any known language to take an order for bread and butter, not to speak of listening in on political discussions, I wished the G.P.U. had a few linguists to scatter about for the convenience of the traveling public.

The first days in Russia are spent in the properly iconoclastic task of smashing all the false images of the Soviet rule collected on the outside. No traveler finds what he has been led to expect — nor can be led to

expect what he finds. He is unprepared, for instance, for the bourgeois comfort and also for the slack management of hotels administered by a rigid proletarian system. The hotels frequented by foreigners in Moscow are all operated at a loss, in spite of New York prices, by the Moscow Soviet. At the Grand we lived in overfurnished rooms in which bourgeois tables, gold chairs, petit-point and Empire bric-a-brac were mixed with proletarian oak beds, shoddy red-and-green carpets and a pine office desk equipped with a telephone connected with the best service in Europe. Towels were scarcer than Tsars' monograms, and hot water for the bath was obtained by lighting a blazing wood fire under the boiler in an unventilated bath room. The personnel worked on eight hour shifts and could neither be hired nor fired by the manager, whose duties, like those of so many functionaries in a workers' republic, seemed to be purely honorary. Sometimes two or three casual comrades tended the office desk; often it took care of itself. The book-keepers, however, were always on duty. In all state enterprises more book-keeping than any other kind of labor is required for every transaction. There are so many accountants, auditors, supervisors, and supervisors of supervisors, that if all the book-keepers were not dressed in workers' smocks one could accuse the dictatorship of the proletariat of creating more white-collar jobs than any government on earth.

In the evening we sat at a table by the window in the long dining room where foreign business men, a little bored, and élite labor delegations, a little bewildered, were stayed with flagons, and feebly cheered by lamp shades, a solemn orchestra, a cleared space for the dancers



who so seldom obliged. We ate bortsch containing great slabs of meat, and then plates piled with meat, followed by a sliver of watermelon or a dab of ice cream. So heavy is the cost of light eating in the proletarian menage that only a parvenu would splurge to the extent of ordering a sandwich or a lettuce leaf for double the price of a full meal. Earnest Russians in wrinkled blouses came to dine, and there were endless rounds of hot tea in glasses and endless discussions of Russia.

And underneath the window the endless crowds milled back and forth in the Square of the Revolution. A moving picture theatre lost in a big upper room in the far corner of the hotel attracted some to scenes of bloody revolutionary melodrama or old American Wild West films. Sport clubs, clad in shorts, trooped by to bathe in the Moscow River or trooped home from a game in the Red Stadium on the Lenin Hills, hills of the pilgrims, the historic ridge to the southwest whence Napoleon first looked on Moscow in 1812 and the Red Artillery shelled the Cadets in 1917. On all the nights of the too brief summer, throngs fill the workers' open-air clubs and the wide untidy parks, particularly the Neskuchny Sad, the "Not Tiresome Garden," and the datcha colonies for miles around are almost as populous as the city itself. Or searchlights rake the Red Square and the Iberian gates are choked with workers pushing in to a mass meeting. Above the old Senate house of the Kremlin the Red flag is always lighted like a torch.

How proletarian this capital really is I do not know. In all of Russia there are not four million industrial workers, so that while Moscow is the chief center of industry and trade probably less than one fourth of these

parading masses are proletarian in the strict sense. The majority are more likely to be office employes, government clerks, book-keepers, bureaucrats, what we should call the middle class. But all alike are animated by the proletarian spirit and thrilled by this proletarian pageantry. However drab and dilapidated and regimented and cruel are the living conditions of the worker in the capital established in his name, life itself is livelier and more varied than he has ever known it. He has a sense of participation in great experiments. You observe in the Moscow streets that all these intent, unsmiling people never look aimless, they all push on as if they were going somewhere and must get there. Nowhere else in Russia will you feel the same stir of urgency and consciousness of destination. Here, and here alone so far, is the proletariat so concentrated and so powerful as to give a visual demonstration of the destruction and the changes implicit in its revolution.

M. Paléologue in his *Memoirs* speaks of the Red Square as one of the half dozen places in the world where all history is dramatized. The whole epic of Russia, he says, is expressed in the violent contrasts of the Kremlin. But never in all its dramatic history has the Red Square seen drama to compare with the spectacle of to-day, and nothing in the gorgeous contradictions of the Kremlin architecture is half so violent as the present contrasts in the Moscow streets. They are the most exciting streets in the world. The Bear that Walks like a Man walks on his head — and walks straighter than he ever walked before.



## THE CAPITAL OF THE TSARS

It is the fate of Leningrad to be always Petersburg. Moscow, whatever it is, is alive and Russian; it swarms with the living. Petersburg, whatever it was, was not Russian. It is dead, and leaves behind it a surplus population of ghosts — ghosts of a ruling caste banished more completely than any class was ever banished by any revolution in the history of the world.

Peter the Great would have his “window on the West,” though he built it on bones, as the Russians say, remembering how many perished as the swamps were drained. What he built was not a Russian but a Western, a cosmopolitan city, the most modern and spacious capital in Europe. With broad streets, or Prospekts, radiating

between classic façades, this capital might have been an ampler and more imperial Washington, true to colossal plan as no democratic capital could ever be, if it were not also a kind of sombre Venice, with shadow-streaked canals and a gray lagoon whence the Neva, freezing and flooding with the seasons, sweeps darkly out to the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea.

The fatal infatuation of the Romanovs for the West and the sea cut them adrift from the dim steppe where there is neither salt wind nor any news of Europe. It led them to put up the biggest of all Admiralty buildings for an insignificant navy. The huge hull of the Ministry of Marine blocks the end of the Nevsky Prospekt; all the great vistas lead to its mast-like spire, a golden compass needle forever pointing in the wrong direction. The archives are filled with grandiose plans and programs and naval estimates — and that is very Russian — of which the issue was a little fleet that made nothing better than a target on any sea. Best of all the imperial regalia Nicholas II liked his uniform of an Admiral of the fleet. The last of all the uniforms he wore hangs limp as he left it in a cupboard at Tsarskoye-Selo, and there remains at Livadia, the white palace on the Crimean coast, the last toy rigged up for the young Alexei, the high prow of a ship whence the little Prince, in gold braid, could play at commanding the manœuvres in the Black Sea.

To-day the enormous squares, the great waterways, the magnificent perspectives of Petersburg have the atmosphere, stagnant and a little sepulchral, of an immense gallery. Or of a foreign stage setting magnificently erected for a great show that never came off. When I saw Eisenstein, autocrat of the Sovkino, direct-

ing a mob before the Winter Palace for a scene in "The End of St. Petersburg," the heavy imperial front of the biggest royal residence in Europe seemed at last fulfilling the purpose for which it was made. Unreal in Russia are the baroque and classic private palaces, associated with the names of exotic architects like Trestini, Rastrelli, Guarenghi, Rossi; the reduced model of St. Peter's in Rome that is the Kazan Cathedral; the massive St. Isaac's that might be in Berlin. They are so unreal, these symmetrical Latin edifices, that the strange uses to which they are now put are hardly incongruous; back stage it is not surprising to see gilt cornices overhanging replicas of prison cells, as in the Revolutionary Museum in the Winter Palace; blue-bloused boys playing pool in a prince's bed-room, as in the Youssupov Palace, or iron girders thrust through the golden gloom, as in St. Isaac's, to support the trembling dome of a Cathedral.

Almost as difficult to believe in is Leningrad as the battleground of the Workers' Revolution. That, too, is one of those ironic consequences of their own acts which were forever overtaking the Romanovs. The effect of creating a Western city by imperial edict, and concentrating there all the power and luxury and culture of the empire, was to encircle its palace area with factories, and out of that jostle of industry, wealth and intelligence to breed the discontent which culminated in revolution. The Western window opened far too wide. Petersburg was hardly completed when it witnessed the first strike of any Russian workers, the mutiny of the weavers in 1747. Thereafter the capital seethed with strikes and conspiracies. The history of the revolution, as told in the

long accusing galleries in the Winter Palace, where the ghosts of the triumphant rebels at last confront the ghosts of the defeated Tsars, covered a hundred years. It began with the disastrous rising of the Dekabrists in 1825, and went on, in sporadic flashes, until the Tsar who fired on the workers in front of this palace in 1905 was unseated by the February revolution in 1917 and the October revolution of the same year overthrew the Provisional Government of Kerensky and the Mensheviks and put the surprised Bolsheviks in power.

In Petersburg was formed the first Communist Workers' Union. From 1893 it was the revolutionary headquarters of Lenin during the brief intervals when he was not in exile. In 1905 was organized there, the first Soviet, or Council, of workers' deputies. The Smolny Institute, the huge school for the daughters of the aristocracy founded by Catherine II, now the seat of the Soviet of the Northern Province, was the general headquarters of the Revolution, the birthplace of the present government and the scene of the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets which elected the first Council of the People's Commissars.

The Smolny is as typical of Russian gigantism as the Winter Palace or the Admiralty. From the classic assembly hall, where the dictatorship of the proletariat was proclaimed on a stage used to the noble sentiments of girl graduates, we followed a glum Red soldier down endless halls, empty except for plasterers and rubbish, to the two little back rooms in which Lenin lived with his wife during the first days of the Revolution. Trotsky describes him there on the morning after the historic 25th of October. Lenin was stretched on a rug on the

floor trying to sleep while the Council of the Soviets was still in session down the corridor. When word came of the capture of the Winter Palace, he was intensely excited, astounded by the swift rush of events. Psychologists can make what they will of the fact that in that moment of high excitement, the great moment of his life, the leader of the Russian Revolution spoke in German. "‘It makes one dizzy,’ he said, and made the sign of the cross before his face."

Lenin won the siege of Petersburg because the Russian soldier and the Russian peasant were hungry and sick to death of war and no one else promised them bread and peace. Though he assumed there greater powers than the Tsar's, it was not his capital, and he knew it. It was not the capital of Russia. To those who protested against leaving the birthplace of the Revolution — "Smolny is only Smolny because we are in it," he said. "When we are in the Kremlin all this symbolism will be transferred to the Kremlin." So the new Russia moved to the oldest citadel, the "holy city," and Peter's massive town became once more an outpost, as it was in the days when he built his Fortress of Peter and Paul and drove out the Swedes.

"You misunderstood Russia and her whole past," the poet Aksakov reproached the memory of Peter. "Away from your people you built a solitary city." That city has now lost its Western provinces — Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Poland — its old masters, its old glitter, all its empire. The population, although again nearly what it was before the revolution, does not prevent the great streets from looking empty; the dejected palaces of the aristocracy brood over the tragedy of their old



owners; moss mildews the squares. The Nevsky Prospekt has become the Main Street of a dull provincial town. The Reds of to-day have painted out the murky red of the Romanovs and covered the walls of the Winter Palace with an unnatural vernal green. But it is still the city of the Tsars. Lenin possesses the Kremlin, and Leningrad remains Petersburg.

So it is intended. The first thing the traveler sees, coming out of the October railway station, is Troubetzkoy's ribald monument of Alexander III, father of the late Tsar, a feeble figure clinging for dear life to the enormous wild horse which is Russia. It is the one imperial monument the old ruling caste wished to take down on account of its mockery and their successors insist on keeping up for the same reason.

"My son and my father were executed when living and now disgrace has overtaken me even after death," the inscription reads. "I stand here like a brazen scarecrow for the land that has shaken off forever the yoke of aristocracy."

"The Scarecrow" the monument is called, and as scarecrows the surviving relics of Tsarism are maliciously preserved. Elsewhere the name of the Romanovs is summarily erased. Russia is a land of empty pedestals, or of improvised plaster Davids surmounting great granite bases on which equestrian Goliaths used to prance. In Leningrad the relics of autocracy and aristocracy are carefully kept and scientifically exhibited, as in modern natural history collections extinct specimens are shown surrounded by the natural flora and fauna, with their young, their food and their victims. It is the Communist



museum of imperialism, and of propaganda against imperialism. Who, it asks, could look at the old rulers in their habits as they lived, in their luxury, their cruelty, above all in their commonplaceness, and ever again take seriously the pretensions of any emperor to power?

The capital of the Tsars is a procession of their palaces — Winter palaces, Summer palaces, palaces for this or the other Romanov who wearied of the old house in the course of two hundred years and built a new one. The large and gilded discomfort in which kings are condemned to live is no more pompous in Russia than it is in Spain or Italy, is less overpowering than in the royal reliquaries of France. The tired visitor understands why the bored Tsars fled from those monotonous marbles and mirrors. But why did they choose the droll or dreary cubby holes in which they really lived? The Winter Palace is a solemn and gloomy pile even as a museum; as a house, the tasteless private apartments were so dark on the rainy day I plodded through that the cells of the revolutionists duplicated on the ground floor by way of grim contrast seemed to me rather cozier and hardly more comfortless dwelling places.

More cheerful are the Summer palaces, set in green parks within a twenty or thirty mile radius of the city, particularly the lordly pleasure houses conceived by Peter the Great and Catherine, most vigorous and liveliest of the Romanovs and of all the rulers of their time. Catherine's palace at Tsarskoye-Selo lies across an English park from the Alexander Palace, in which Nicholas and his family secluded themselves after the rising of 1905. It is a stately parade of bright and beautiful rooms lighted on both sides and so arranged, as rooms are in

most Russian houses, that the first is visible from the last, a half mile away.

Peterhof is of all royal residences the most charming. It looks to the sea across fantastic fountains and gardens lovelier in aspect than those of Versailles; the vast park is a kind of suburb of royal villas, and a puckish humor had its way with the fountains. They break out of trees or walls or in the middle of paths like a ripple of laughter; one sits on a bench and it suddenly begins to spout. The last occupant of the guest rooms was Poincaré. That was in July, 1914, just before the cyclone that swept all the emperors into the dust heap, — a date remote everywhere, but here literally antediluvian. Nothing gives a sharper realization of the distance Russia has traveled since than the thought of all the prehistoric implications of that now-impossible visit of a President to a Tsar.

To-day a comrade in a white smock does the honors at Peterhof. He gave me flowers from the imperial conservatory, and although it was after the closing hour opened with great pride the glittering chambers that march along the terrace. Thence a sparkling stairway of cascades descends to a long avenue of water flowing between tall trees to the sea. In the Empress Elizabeth room a table was set with the same service spread for the President of France at the last state dinner given by the Tsar. The banquet is recalled by the French Ambassador as a spectacle such as no court in the world could rival. "I shall long remember the dazzling display of jewels on the women's shoulders. It was simply a fantastic shower of diamonds, pearls, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, topaz, beryls — a blaze of fire and flame."

We dined, too, at Peterhof, in a restaurant the Soviet has opened in one of the servants' wings of the palace. Two of the comrades were our guests. The first was a teacher who in the summer was custodian for one of the lesser royal residences in the park. She spoke French timidly, as if afraid to be caught in that bourgeois language; when we turned out not to be labor delegates she confessed to a hopeless passion for china of the Russian Elizabethan period. The other was our guide. He struggled with an English pocket dictionary, but made up what he lacked as an interpreter by his energy in banging upon all closed doors until they opened. A workman who in hours of unemployment acted as a super in the Maierhold Theatre and studied English and Japanese, — "I like Americans and Japs," he explained; "therefore I learn their languages" — he was the only Russian we met to whom nothing was ever impossible. If there were a million more of him crashing as calmly through red tape, there would be less reason to fear that the new dictators will be as fatally strangled by bureaucracy as were the old.

The room in which we dined was fly-blown and dusty, and the service was not such as we had seen displayed as the gross extravagance of Tsars. But the china was truly regal and the prices our friends found as excessive as if we were emperors. They kept exclaiming over them and insisting upon ordering half portions in a consideration for their hosts which we found only less touching than their childlike delight in such unusual delicacies as a salad and a veal cutlet.

Over the tea we talked far into the evening about the new education which will expunge even from

history the former masters of Peterhof and the God with Whom they were allied. I questioned whether Russia could be taught to forget its past and abandon its saints. "Why not?" cried the teacher in a French suddenly fluent with feeling, "why not, if all history is made but the prelude to this hour, and we teach the name of God as a synonym for exploitation?" The color flamed in her cheeks; was that fire resentment or zeal? One often wonders that in talking to Russian teachers, but one is careful never to ask what they really think. She rose and shut the door fiercely on three comrades in the next room who had been pounding on a tuneless piano. Then she stood silent at the window and after a while beckoned us to look out upon the park. It was a radiant night. The white moonlight cut paths through the trees to a silken sea. But melancholy hung over the bright wood like a cloud. I do not know why Peterhof should be sadder than Versailles. Perhaps because there is no gaiety to remember in any act of the Russian royal tragedy. The figures haunting this wood did not dance to their doom. They never heard the music for which they paid the piper. Even in their playgrounds they appear as helpless as Alexander on his horse, straddling a steed moved by the forces of nature and of destiny.

The imperial palaces are freely exhibited, are even gloated over. Gloating is the only word for it. In the deserted and revealing houses of the Tsars the proletarians scoff at the vulgar taste of emperors. The panting little woman who piloted us through the rooms of Nicholas at Tsarskoye-Selo — now the Children's Village — kept asking if we did not find them hideous. "You see the kind of thing they admired? You observe that the

Tsaritsa was mad and that the Tsar was nothing? This tapestry of Marie Antoinette was sent by the President of France as a wedding present to the Empress. He had a pretty and prophetic taste in presents, that one! Yes, I knew her; knew the lot. She took to theosophy at the last. He was always afraid of her. Here is the door through which they left on their last journey, the day we saw the last of them."

We were shown, too carefully, all that they left behind — the old-fashioned dresses in the long wardrobes, the books on the tables, the bottles on the shelves, the half-smoked pipe, the children's presents, the braces for the weak back of the Tsarevitch, his abandoned toys. The exhibition had not, however, the effect intended. The last Romanovs left no trace of the magnificence one expects of Autocrats of all the Russias. They lived unimpressively in an unimpressive house with their tawdry and stuffy belongings, the pettiest of petty bourgeois. The Empress with her bed walled in with poor ikons, Nicholas with his study, his bedroom, even his bath, plastered with family photographs, were like thousands of other Russians. How many houses of kulaks, the so-called rich peasants, I have seen almost identically garnished with ikons and family photographs. So, finding them so little royal, one felt a greater pity for this ordinary family caught up in extraordinary tragedy. They were not big enough for epic cruelty.

Compared to the fate of the Romanovs, the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette was an orderly process of law. Yet I never heard a Russian express the slightest feeling for the royal family. A workman assured me that Russians had nothing to do with the



murder at Ekaterinburg; "it was those Bolsheviks!" A peasant considered that "the Little Father deserved to be killed for not keeping us out of war and all this trouble." As I watched the masters of the new Russia trailing through the palaces of the old rulers, I was most struck, indeed, by the complete detachment of their curiosity and their comment. They showed neither malice nor pity for those who ten years before had been accepted as divinely appointed rulers. They come in droves, drawn from factories and farms in the "educational excursions" that are a suggestive feature of the contemporary scene. The palaces are so well kept that at Tsarskoye-Selo the proletarians are obliged to put on a kind of flannel slipper before they are allowed to enter the royal rooms. Thus shod, they shuffle through in processions, seldom pausing over anything except the toboggan slide built for the Tsarevitch in the middle of one of the main reception rooms.

The same processions are conducted day after day through the interminable galleries of the Hermitage. I shall always remember the Hermitage as something more and other than an incomparable museum of art; I think of it as the scene of the introduction of the mob to the masterpieces. It was not only that I hardly saw the masterpieces for the mob, so crowded was every room, but that I kept seeing them again and newly — the bright illusion and piety of Fra Angelico and Simone Martini, the suave color and finesse of Raphael and Da Vinci, the shadowy glory of the great parade of Rembrandts — through the innocent wide eyes of this Russia, drawn for the first time from the streets and the



steppe into this urbane and painted commune — drawn out of the Third and into the First International!

Each docile group was accompanied by a shrill lecturer; they stood quiet, moved together, were unquickened but possessive, a perfect and impressive demonstration of the proletariat dragooned for culture. These are ours, they seemed to say, as the elder Morgan, I have heard, rejoiced in the acquisition of a Keats' manuscript, for pride of ownership rather than for any special interest in the poet. They appeared also a little awed and strange, but that may have been a projection of my own feeling, because by the time I got to the Hermitage, after three or four weeks of less conventional sight-seeing, I had grown so used to the proletarian environment that the sight of old rooms that might have been in the Louvre or the Metropolitan was as startling as anything new I saw. No other gallery contrasts so sharply as the Hermitage with the life outside its doors. One of the first pictures I noticed was a "St. Cecilia" by that sentimental and over-mannered Bolognese, Carlo Dolci. It was only an elegant Italian lady seated in a velvet chair at an organ and exceedingly conscious of her handsome dress of stiff green silk. She brought as little breath of heaven into that place as did Canaletto's gorgeous "Reception to the French Ambassador by a Doge of Venice." What they brought was an almost overpowering breath of the world! I was dazed to realize that this painted world was nearer to the world I knew than was the world beyond the windows. To get the full shock of contrast, however, one should go straight from the proletarian streets to the mellow poetry of the Giorgione "Judith" or Rembrandt's "Danaë." It is worth a long journey to

experience that dizzy chute from Bolshevism into humanism, from our ancestral civilization to this civilization without ancestors.

All the private palaces, the proud houses lining the canals and prospects where the aristocracy once congregated, might be labeled as the Sheremetiev Palace actually is: Museum Illustrating the Life and Customs of the Nobility. You have to go to what is left of these mansions to re-create the legend of the medieval magnificence of the old Russia. The Romanovs lived like the tedious middle-class family they essentially were; it was the great families of the court who lived like emperors. The blaze of their splendor made the outer darkness. In the Youssupov Palace on the Moika, where remains untouched the beautifully fitted private theatre of so many brilliant performances, we were given a private show, a dramatic version of the killing of Rasputin in the underground study of the young Prince Felix. The impersonator was the custodian of the teachers' club now established in the splendid rooms of the Youssupovs. She was a tall woman of middle age with the uncanny power possessed by all Russians for melodrama and evocation. We saw Rasputin die; I shall never forget him crawling up the stairs.

The occupants of these denuded houses are dead or departed. Proletarian Russia has no room and no use for them. The object of the class war was and is to destroy the old ruling class. The fortunate among the survivors are those who have found enough favor in the eyes of the new dictators to be permitted to occupy a room or two in the basement of their old houses. Some, like the prince

of the Obelenski family who directs a state bank; like the great Pavlov, Koslov, and other distinguished members of the Academy of Science; like some bankers and managers of state trusts; like most engineers, technicians and scholars willing to conform, are employed — and eagerly employed — in the development of the new system.

Not many bishops remain out of the great hierarchy of the Orthodox Church. Up to 1923 the Bolsheviki pursued with special fury the churchmen whom they associated with the former rulers, but the priests, miserable as is the lot of some of the dispossessed in the big cities, in the country at large are part of the people, peasants who shared the common labor and poverty, and no propaganda against religion has succeeded, in the minds of the people, in either reclassifying or dislodging them.

But such survivors of the old order are comparatively few, and allowing for the hundreds of thousands slaughtered or starved to death, the uncounted thousands now in Siberia and in prison (the authorities never give out any figures on political arrests or imprisonments), the two or three million refugees scattered throughout the world, there must still be in all of Russia millions more of the old middle class, government employes, merchants, landowners, professional men, the kind of people we call in other countries "the backbone of the nation;" people who lived not in palaces but in such pleasant houses, for instance, as the forty-three workers' rest clubs and children's vacation houses of Kameny Ostrov, one of the island suburbs of Leningrad. The only worker we saw in any of these rest houses

was a marble figure standing on the broken wall of a palace, his face expressing the challenge of the Latin inscription: "To-day to thee; to-morrow to me." In another was a marble bust of the former "lady of the house;" and in a third, opposite the "Red Corner," the portrait of a proud young couple with their little son. Where have they gone, those who inhabited the now dilapidated little villas in the country, the good, prosperous bourgeois who had their pictures painted to hang in the dining room? Where are they now, they and their children?

The question is hard to answer for the reason that it is very difficult for the traveler to meet anybody who does not in some way represent the Government. In a communist state everybody is not a communist, but "the man in the street," so useful to the reporter elsewhere, is nine times out of ten an employe of the system. He runs a government hotel, or keeps a government shop, or manages a government industry, or works in a government office, a government factory, or on a government paper. If he is out of the circle he avoids foreigners as he would the plague; he has reason to fear the consequence of any traffic with them.

Now Leningrad, besides being a museum of the bad habits of royalty and aristocracy, is in process of becoming the "cultural capital" of the Soviet Union. Here are the Academy of Science, the great historical and scientific collections, an old and famous university. Peter's city was not only the center of wealth and social life, but also the center of literary activity and the gathering place of the revolutionary intelligentsia. In contrast to the rest of Russia it has still a distinct flavor of Western

classicism and culture. Naturally, therefore, there is in Leningrad an unusual concentration of the survivors of the past. The fate of the Russian university professors, suddenly commanded to deny all they had taught, or to improvise texts and courses never taught anywhere before, is a tragedy of the Revolution more poignant than the dispossession of landlords or the confiscation of bank accounts. Six thousand teachers are said to have perished in the Revolution; as many more, perhaps, are living in exile. Most of the shabby old professors, curators of museums, caretakers of literary monuments, librarians and other subdued enthusiasts for learning are plainly hangovers from another epoch. They have the air of decayed gentility, the knowledge of languages, the easy manners, that distinguish them from other employes of the new State. Their eagerness to talk to the rare visitor from other countries is the index of their complete isolation from the outside world and from the society in which they live. An ancient scholar and littérateur waited one evening to receive us in the pleasant Empire rooms in the house of the poet Pushkin, now a museum. The old gentleman was himself like a ghost from the past. So frail and threadbare and undernourished he looked, so alien to the present, that even the zest and charm of his conversation could not prevent us from wondering how he lived. On his desk was a plate containing some coins, the admission fees to the museum, but when we added a few rubles as we left, he was embarrassed and distressed. "Oh, I beg you," he protested, holding out the plate. "You are guests." We said something about his courtesy in opening the house after hours for our benefit. "But I have looked forward to it all



day," he said. " You cannot know what it means to meet someone from the world! "

Some survivors of the old order, therefore, the proletariat employs. The statement applies to teachers, doctors, accountants, functionaries of one kind or another, who have held their posts for twenty years or more, as they tell you when you ask them. Many others are lost in the mass, forgotten until some " round-up," such as the wholesale arrests following the break with England, shows them up as a searchlight reveals the depressions in a dark field.

It is a suggestive commentary on the social topsyturvy that you do not ask questions in Russia unless you are pretty sure of the answers. People do not boast about having seen better days. The proletarian dictatorship suppresses the freedom of all but one class. The rest, if they are unlucky enough to be forced to remain where they are not wanted, skulk and hide and make themselves as inconspicuous as other outcast classes do in other societies. That is the dark side of dictatorships everywhere. A class dictatorship is the most indiscriminately oppressive because it always identifies the individual with his class.

Only by rare chance does a member of the outlawed class talk to the foreigner and give him an inkling of the state of mind of the minority that is not consciously proletarian. One I met was the timid youth whose father had been a landowner and a high official under the Tsar. " We are a lost generation," he said, with that shrug of the fatalist that explains so much of the resignation of the Slav. " I was a child at the time of the Revolution. I have no feeling for the old regime. Many of my age are



like me. We should like to work with the government. We are, after all, Russians, and they are the rulers of Russia. But there is no chance for us. I have been fortunate enough to escape suspicion. I am not persecuted; I am simply ignored and denied. When there are not jobs enough for the others, why should we expect work? We are the sons of our fathers, finished before we begin. The sooner we fade out of the scene the better."

Of quite another type was the marine engineer in the next compartment on the train from Leningrad to Moscow. He holds the same post under the Bolsheviks that he occupied under the Imperial Government, and he made very frank comparisons of the two regimes. I asked him, as one whose special knowledge makes him useful under any system, how an old bourgeois feels under proletarian rule. He laughed. "My wife is the one who suffers. Her life is one long struggle to bring up the children according to some code and standard she won't admit to be finished. But I — well, when I visited America years ago, my favorite point of observation of American life was the beach at Coney Island! And my son is like me. He distresses his mother because he falls so naturally into proletarian habits. All the children do. I could not live in Moscow; conditions are too impossible. Perhaps if I were not comfortable where I am, if I were not part of the works, I should feel differently. As it is, I see the tragedy of my class; but it is the big push up which counts, isn't it?"

"You must remember that most of the discontent in the old days simmered among us of the middle classes. We were the ones who paved the way for the Revolution, who made the first revolution. Lenin, however

bitter against us he was at first because our idea of revolution was not his, saw before he died that we are very necessary for consolidating revolution. He would have made use of a good deal of building material now going to waste in this country. But give us time. No government has ever learned more quickly from its own mistakes than this."

The capital I have described is a museum, a relic of the Russia that was, symbol of all that has been condemned and abandoned. It is the most magnificent gesture of a dead dynasty, once the most powerful in Europe, and it has, in a sense, been left to them. At its most splendid, and it is still splendidly desolate, it can never have been a happy town. Its gilt was always tarnished by the mists of the swamps and the north seas; its court was always stalked by terror and tragedy. The Romanovs were depressing at their best, and something dark and violent, as in Medicean Florence, crouched under the glamour of the great Slav nobles. They moved through a buzz of intrigue, suspicion, espionage. One hears still, faintly, the exaggerated crescendo of the Russian dance of the days before the Revolution.

The Leningrad of to-day hardly obtrudes upon these memories. It appears mostly at night, when the past and its pageant are pooled in the darkness of the wide squares and the lapping waters of the Neva and its sluggish branches. Then throngs of young people appear on the dimly lighted Nevsky Prospekt. They troop in and out of the movies, they fill the cafés, they even dance. The atmosphere is less austere than that of Moscow, where there is no night life except in the gambling places and

the cellar cabarets of the singing gypsies. The Communists, contrary to their reputation, have a strictly Puritan attitude toward pleasure as well as luxury. The Party does not approve of the bourgeois follies of jazz and fox-trotting. But in Leningrad the cafés are crowded, there is as much beer-drinking as if the capital were as German as the "Baltic barons" tried to make it, and they dance all night on the roof of the Hotel Europe. That hotel is phantasmagoric. With its immense and pretentious front, its casual service ended at three o'clock in the afternoon, its full complement of modern but crumbling bathrooms, its general air of vast irrelevancy, it sums up all that Leningrad has to say.

They do not dance in Moscow; they are all too busy building a new world. Leningrad is very dull and deserted compared to the proletarian capital. But it has a surprising small-town gaiety on summer nights. It fox-trots without shame, it sips something more like coffee than anything else obtainable in coffee-less Russia, it has a suggestion of manner, of amenity. It is, in a word, a little bourgeois Petersburg.

## THE NEW RULING CLASS

WALKING one evening along the right bank of the Moscow River I suddenly saw the Kremlin unobstructed and whole. It was overpoweringly strange and beautiful; ramparts and towers and lustrous domes loomed like a mirage in the clear jade sky of the long summer twilight. A row of lighted windows in a high wall indicated where the Central Committee of the Communist Party, then in session, was fighting the last round in the two-year struggle against Trotsky and the Opposition. At that moment the hall of passionate debate was only a bright line in a picture, and the battle and its issue seemed to me as supremely unimportant as such conflicts always will be to the Kremlin and the yellow river. I wondered

why the traveler does not concentrate on the art and architecture of old Russia. One often wonders that. There is nearly as much treasure in the uncelebrated Suzdalian towns as on the faded hill tops of Umbria.

And then I turned to the other side of the street — and knew why. It was a typical Moscow street, once an avenue of rich merchants' houses and now a succession of jumbled tenements with open windows revealing the whole fret and ferment of proletarian life. I did not see the babies hung on the gas jets and the old baba stowed away for the night in the bureau drawer, as a local theatre represented "Bedtime in Moscow," but I saw dozens of scenes quite as suggestive of burlesque. In a ground floor room the children were being huddled to bed in one corner while a meeting, perhaps of the Dom Kom, the committee of tenants which manages the communal houses, was in session in the other. It was a stormy session; committee and complainants were shouting all at once. Through the din, on a window ledge in the basement underneath, a pale old man worked doggedly at what looked like a translation. A little lost child whimpered by the river wall, and in a city in which forlorn bands of homeless children were a commonplace in every street an anxious crowd immediately gathered to discuss the plight of one. On the steep and shaggy embankment bathers casually dressed and undressed for their evening swim, but on that conventional spectacle the people who strolled beside us never wasted a glance. Their eyes were on the dark bulk of the Kremlin; they speculated on the outcome of the quarrel between the angry heirs of Lenin. How study old architecture when all

around us fluttered the first ragged blue prints for the façade of a new world.

We were on our way to a factory club to see a performance by the "Blue Blouses," the groups of workers who form a kind of Little Theatre movement for the factory. With the "Red Corners" and the "Wall Papers" the Blue Blouses mix color and even satire with the stream of propaganda forever playing upon the mind of the worker. They are now more or less professionalized; the same groups go from factory to factory with the same performance, like a vaudeville troupe, but even where they are not picked and trained, as in remote towns and in extemporaneous village shows, their instinct for the theatre, the almost universal Russian impulse and aptitude for self-expression, enlivens the crudest peasant entertainment. This evening, following an act warning the audience of the need of preparedness against the foreign enemy, always waiting to pounce, they presented in pantomime a mild and amusing skit on American mass production and exploitation of labor. One of the characters was Henry Ford made up to look like a rather elegant Uncle Sam wearing spats and a monocle. He was portrayed as at the same time a slave-driving dynamo, the chief profiteer of a system grinding down the worker, and a model of the mechanical efficiency the Russian worker is taught to worship. American radicals satirize the belt system of the Ford factory as the noose in which humanity is caught by capital; here I saw it held up as a shining symbol of human liberation.

Our unexpected appearance caused a little embarrassment. A Blue Blouse slid in from behind the curtain



and quickly abstracted an American flag from under Henry's long coat-tails. I don't know why, because most Russian workers with whom we talked, while eager to hear about the wages and living conditions of American labor, never missed an opportunity to instruct us on the evils of our capitalistic system. They did not believe us when we spoke of workers owning automobiles and houses, or mentioned the fantastically high wages and low prices of American industrial cities. "Even if it were true," concluded one questioner after long pondering, "I would still rather be a free worker in Russia than live in a gilded cage in America!"

The Blue Blouses were clever and spirited; they made themselves into wheels and pistons and whirring machinery with amazing gymnastic skill. They had the precision and coherence seen oftener on than off the stage in Russia. But the really illuminating event of the evening was the graduation of twelve student workers, or apprentices, after a three-year course in the factory part-time school. The twelve boys represented the new generation of the Russian worker. They were Young Communists, or Comsomols, trained for ten years in the proletarian religion, and in no other religion. Presiding at the exercises was a youth of about eighteen, gay, casual and perfectly self-assured. The addresses were made by older workers from other factories, bullet-headed men in faded blouses who repeated with solemn fluency what graduates are told by their elders everywhere. Also — and here the orators departed from the universal and expressed the Russian platitude — that since they worked in a factory belonging to themselves, in a state in which they were the masters, they must take

care of their tools and speed up production to the end that the commonwealth and their share in the commonwealth should rapidly increase.

Earnestness, the kind of high-pitched earnestness manifested by American youth when it is the crack eleven going into the decisive game of the season, was the high note of the entertainment. The hall in which we sat was dirty and fetid and dilapidated, like all of Moscow. It was so overcrowded that when we arrived there was hardly standing room and some one in charge yanked three comrades out of the front row and pushed us into their hot chairs. During the intermission in the interminable program we all trooped downstairs and in another dusty and battered room looked at an exhibit of the work of the students. Nobody noticed us, as always we were aliens in a strange world, but as I listened to those galvanized boys and the responsive cheers of that shabby audience, punctuated after every speech by a shouting snatch of the "International," I could not but perceive that the thrill of the proletariat in the conviction of its power, whether that power is a reality or not, and whether or not it is accompanied by privations, is a thrill that makes a sense of collective dictatorship almost as intoxicating as a sense of personal dictatorship. Mussolini lives most of the year in a workman's flat in a back street in Rome attended by a single old woman servant. He is poor as no ruler in the world is poor. Power suffices him. Compared to the strange and exhilarating scent of power, what then is overcrowding and poverty to a class which has never known anything else?

Whatever one finds or fails to find in Russia, one sees the industrial worker metamorphosed and inebriated

by the feeling of power. He is here the top dog, and he knows it. He is developing, in fact, a kind of arrogance. Taught to regard himself as the pillar of the new society, he begins to assume something of the pompous strut of pillars everywhere. It may be that the government exercised in his name is bankrupt. Trotsky charges that it has been living on a ready-made "inherited capital," now exhausted. Many critics see ruin ahead for a system which paid nothing for its plant, and with the highest prices and the poorest product in the world is unable so far to run its industries at a real profit. It may be that no imperial insolence in history ever equaled the presumption of the 35,000 Communists who forced nearly 150,000,000 people to adopt their ideas, their economic theories, their philosophy of life, death and the hereafter. "The State," said Lenin, "is the tyranny of a minority over a majority;" it remains only to decide which minority shall tyrannize. It may be that existence under an economic formula is more dreary and crushing than existence under an uneconomic formula. To the intellectual unquestionably it is.

All that has nothing to do with the human drama palpable in the assumption of rulership by a class that never before, except for brief blazes of revolution, as in France during the Commune, ruled anywhere. You go to Russia to see that ruler in action. As novelty, as spectacle and experiment if nothing else, all other political and social entertainments are as trivial as the latest sob story compared to the Book of Job.

The new ruler may be as transient as the scripture of to-day, but he has a sense of himself as a potentate for whom all the ages have been waiting and toward whom

the oppressed proletariat of the earth looks for light and leading. "We move with history," a young Communist told me. "We move with the force of history. Therefore we are invincible." It was a phrase I heard often in a society where everybody has the same phrases, where the delusion of grandeur that once inflated kings is now by phrases straightening the backs and kindling the minds of a people.

The new ruler is, as I have suggested, homeless. Housing conditions in Moscow are not only the worst in the world but the most hopeless if the population continues to grow at the rate of 100,000 a year and all possible agencies and efforts cannot provide new quarters for more than 40,000. So I was informed gloomily by the executive secretary of the Moscow Soviet, with whom I spent an instructive afternoon over a polished desk in an extraordinarily neat office. We had tea and cakes, and examined enormous sheaves of figures which he kept sending for in a sincere desire to show the American inquirer how a great city is administered under the Soviet system. Representatives of every kind of worker, including the houseworker, sit on the Moscow city council. It has a membership of more than two thousand, finally sifted down, as all so-called representative bodies are in Russia, to a carefully picked executive committee of 235 which elects an actual governing body, or presidium, of thirty-one. The Moscow Soviet runs twenty trusts and more different kinds of smaller businesses than any municipality on earth. It is landlord to nearly five million people in the Moscow district, called government or gubernia. Some of its enterprises are profitable,

the tramway system, for example, but the profits go to keep alive the unprofitable businesses, like the hotels, or for expansion, as in the metallurgical trust, or for repairs and new equipment, as for the fleet of English motor buses purchased in 1927 to supplement the overcrowded street car service.

Rents for the workers are very low, so low that although the municipal landlord has no capital investment in the expropriated houses and pays no taxes, the income is insufficient to cover the cost of necessary repairs. This accounts for the rapid deterioration of the buildings and explains why the housing crisis, natural enough in a city growing beyond all bounds like Moscow, is felt even in Leningrad and Kiev, where there is more than enough space for the population. It also explains why the government two years ago offered long leases and the privilege of sub-letting to private individuals who would restore dwelling-houses to a habitable state. Special inducements were made this year to encourage private builders, but so many who took advantage of the earlier concessions were afterwards prosecuted for profiteering or given the "minus six," — banishment from the six principal cities of the Union — that the offer is now supposed to have been only a bait to draw out hidden capital. Such bids for investment are not, under the circumstances, very successful, and the present hope of better housing is centered in the buildings being erected as fast as means are available by the trade unions, the co-operatives and the municipality itself.

The new ruler is able to "own" space in these apartment houses, that is to secure title to a long-term



lease, if he can borrow or save the sum necessary for a share or a down payment. That is not easy. The worker has certain benefits that take the place of money, like low rent, free vacations, medical service and social insurance of various kinds, but he has no money margin. He works for shockingly low wages, compared not only to the American but to any Western standard, about sixty-four rubles a month on the average, and he pays very high prices for the necessities of life. Nowhere, however, are so many homeless sheltered under a weatherproof illusion of possession and proprietorship. Nowhere are so many people living in the future. One meets scores of workmen looking forward to "owning their own homes" to-morrow as the sure reward for persevering in the sacrifices necessary to-day to save communism from the boycott of the capitalist world! Meantime, the best houses in the city and the old manorial estates in the country are turned over to them for clubs, sanatoria and recreation centers, and the palaces of grand dukes and princes are theirs to play in; they have the satisfaction of seeing that however wretchedly they live, nobody — in public, at least — lives any better. One learns in Moscow that the most inflaming cause of human discontent is not so much one's own poverty as the wealth of the neighbors.

The new ruler is often out of work. The proportion of unemployment is growing as a result not only of lack of new capital and the drift of the dissatisfied peasant to the town, as I was told, but also, we now learn from the speech of the peasant delegate Chaloff at the last All-Union Congress, to the wholesale shutting down of the Kustarny, or private peasant enterprises, such as



dairies, flour mills, leather works and weaving shops, which employed large numbers of village workers and were able to undersell the government and make profits for themselves. When I was in Russia the number of unemployed, according to the official figures, was 1,668,000. That number counted only registered members of trade unions and would have been vastly augmented by including the unregistered, like the old bourgeoisie, and the hordes of seasonal workers who haunt the towns begging for any kind of work. Outside of Moscow the country was full of vagrants. In Kiev, the trade union headquarters admitted twenty-one per cent of unemployment; the unofficial estimate was fifty per cent.

The proletariat in power does what it can to ease the effects of unemployment. It cannot for lack of funds embark on the great public works planned on paper or bring up to more than a pauper's dole the unemployment insurance, which pays about twelve rubles a month to less than one-fourth of the unemployed. Its leaders acknowledge that without the help of capital for industrial development many of the new ruling class cannot enjoy even the privilege of labor.

At this point two questions arise: How much share has the worker in the control of industry? And how does he exert influence on the policies, industrial and otherwise, of this workers' dictatorship? These are primary questions; they involve a consideration of the entire organization of industry and government under the Soviet system. It would take books to answer them, and then the answers would have to be as tentative as the

constantly fluctuating policies of an administration which advances by going as far as it can in its own direction and then as far back as it must. The most summary survey of the proletarian in power would be meaningless, however, without a glance at the industrial and political structure he has erected.

Since the adoption of the New Economic Policy, following the disastrous experiment in communism, the moneyless, equalitarian chaos of the first years of the Revolution, industry in the Soviet Union has been organized on a purely capitalistic basis. It has a gold-reserve currency, profit sheets, a network of banks loaning money at interest as high as ten per cent, commercial rivalries. The state, of course, is the capitalist. All private enterprise tends to become more and more absorbed in the state trusts, which in their turn tend to become fewer and bigger under a swiftly moving program of consolidation. The ideal of state capitalism is a concentration of Big Business far more inclusive than the monopolies the Sherman Anti-Trust Law tried to prevent in America. Competition survives as a kind of scoring system to pit trust against trust and plant against plant in the heavy race to speed up production, but real competition is the factor in economic life the Russian system abolishes and price fixing and restraint of all but state trade are the policies it adopts. The state trusts control four-fifths of the production and co-operatives and government agencies handle about the same proportion of the wholesale distribution of manufactured goods. Trusts and co-operatives enjoy a certain amount of autonomy in operation, but their course is charted by the Supreme Economic Council, the most

powerful and important department of the government, in conformity with a comprehensive program of co-ordination drawn up in 1926 for five years by the State Planning Commission, the Gosplan.

The Gosplan is a budgeting committee for industry. It has power to relate production to consumption as boards of estimate elsewhere relate taxes to expenditure. Tomsky, head of all the trade unions in the Soviet Republics, assured me that in allowing itself to be stampered by a supposedly unalterable law of supply and demand, mankind has heretofore been dominated by a myth. In contrast to the planless waste of capitalistic competition, he said, supply and demand can easily be controlled and regulated in a communist economy by such an agency as the Gosplan. In its laboratories economic diagnosticians sit around a table and on the basis of researches into every branch of industry calculate and allot the available new capital and actually fix for five years a definite annual quota of production for every factory in the Union.

The essence of the plan is that each part is run in the interests of the whole; thus the profit-making trusts carry the backward industries like iron and steel, and the losses on goods that must be exported for the sake of foreign credits are absorbed by the home market, where prices have no relation to the world market. A strict government monopoly of foreign trade prevents any competition from the cheaper products manufactured outside. It was claimed by the Gosplan at the end of the first year of operation, in September, 1927, that the plan worked; in other words that the actual output tallied with the preliminary estimates. It works with the

aid of the Council of Labor and Defense, which exerts a kind of military pressure. The result is that production does increase and prices can be and have been forced down. High though they seem to the visitor from outside, they are nothing now compared to what they were. In many cases, thanks to the power of the government to regulate according to policy or need, prices are lower than they should be to cover the cost of manufacture.

Of this bold experiment in the scientific regulation of supply and demand, as of other innovations blithely undertaken by the workers' government, one hears and reads in Russia a great deal of biting criticism. Vinogradsky, representing the Soviet syndicates, complained that the attempt to regulate the market according to plan has led to chaos in industry and hindered commercial development. A spokesman for the chemical trust protested that no program could be carried out which decreed a ten per cent decrease in prices while ignoring conditions necessitating a fifteen per cent increase in production costs. And I myself emerged from a session in the Gosplan headquarters full of enthusiasm over the discovery of the perfect plan to prevent industrial anarchy only to bump into a long queue fighting for some "short" commodity almost at the door!

I do not know. The Gosplan is a great and workable idea, but it is not yet tested. One is always haunted by a feeling that such reforms cannot receive a fair test in a field as undeveloped as Russia, and that in a more developed field they could not be tested at all. And in any case the sheer number and magnitude of the experiments attempted by administrators without experience in a field without precedents make it impossible for any

observer, either in or outside Russia, to be sure how they are working. I hesitate to advance figures because no figures are of value without all figures and because I heard so many different statistical versions of the same facts that I never felt sufficiently discriminating to choose between them. Experts in what is called the methodology of statistics believe in the Russian figures. They say that the Soviet experiments absolutely depend upon honest book-keeping, and are bound to fail unless the official ledgers tell the truth. But book-keeping depends as much upon arithmetic as upon rectitude. It was an honest over-estimate of the grain crop a year or so ago, no doubt, that added the total of grain transported by water to the total carried by rail regardless of the circumstance that the same grain often traveled both ways. And in a country desperately anxious for foreign capital, book-keeping might also depend upon the urgency of the need for a favorable showing. The reporter accustomed to verifying his figures by ordinary checks is never quite at ease with statistics which all originate in the same source and must prove not only economic facts but an economic theory.

Figures on wages may be cited as one instance of the confusing effect of statistics. The figure here quoted as the average monthly wage for industrial workers (64.20 rubles) is that given in the Bulletin of the Central Council of Trade Unions of March, 1928, for the first quarter of the fiscal year 1927-1928. It is the latest official estimate. Trotsky in his *Opposition Platform*, recently published in this country ("The Real Situation in Russia"), gives the average wage in the big industries for the third quarter of the fiscal year 1926-1927 as



31 rubles 62 kopeks, in Moscow rubles. On their face Trotsky's figures appear to differ as widely from the official figures as his deductions from figures on living standards, the condition of state industry, education, the benefits of the Gosplan, the elective power of the Soviets, etc., contradict all that foreign investigators are told in Russia. When they are analyzed, however, his figures on wages vary little from the official statistics. By Moscow rubles he evidently refers to the purchasing power of rubles. Taking 25 rubles as the average monthly wage in 1913, the Trade Union Council calculates the average real wage for the first quarter of 1926-1927 as 28.82 rubles and for the first quarter of 1927-1928 as 31.98 rubles. It should be remembered, however, that the industrial workers to whom these figures apply number only 3,589,400 in the entire Union. They are far out-numbered by employes in the public services totalling 4,175,900 (including railway and transport workers, teachers and state functionaries) and of course by agricultural workers. For these no wage averages are computed. Thus without all possible figures, as I have said, without better means than at present exist for checking figures, without a more reliable basis of comparison than pre-war figures, it is futile to try to draw from any selected statistics evidence of the real state of the country.

It cannot be over-emphasized that the factory is the important unit in the Soviet system. Organized labor is the strength and stay of the Bolshevik regime, and the trade unions differ from trade unions elsewhere in being fundamental organs of the state. The original



Soviet was only a strike committee in Petersburg. Such strike committees were organized in all the industrial centers but it apparently never occurred to Lenin to use them as permanent organs of the class dictatorship until he returned to Russia after the February revolution and found them ready-made. "All power to the Soviets!" was a brilliantly improvised slogan which established the primacy of the bench worker. Lenin's idea thereafter was to use the factories as "schools of Communism," and such in the most literal sense they have become. The industrial hierarchy is chosen as far as possible for its competence and its capacity to produce economic results, in default of which, as the leaders of the Party are nervously aware, a government based on economics must become a laughing stock. But primarily the directors of trusts and the managers of factories are scrutinized for "political reliability." Thus the manager of a Soviet factory has an entirely different relation to his operatives than have executives elsewhere; he is a government official. The directors of the trusts are always appointed by the Supreme Economic Council, and the management of each trust chooses men to head the factories under it, usually with the approval of the trade unions.

Some directors are very well paid, and all are very well watched. The supervising of supervisors is a heavy extra charge on the overhead of Soviet industry. Fear of counter-revolution constantly haunts a still revolutionary government, with how much reason was proved by the revelations of industrial sabotage in the recent trial of Russian technicians and German engineers of the Donetz coal basin. The same fear and vigilance act

as a check on initiative. Foreigners doing business with the state trusts find negotiations slow and irritating because executives are afraid to assume any responsibility. I heard an American business man in Moscow complaining that he had to go to Germany to buy Russian furs because of the suspicion and red tape paralyzing official commerce in Russia. The bureaucracy and espionage that always infested Russian government fatally prey on business, too, now that manufacturing and general merchandising are government enterprises.

The workers themselves have no direct voice in management or factory policies. They make collective agreements through their trade unions and workers' committees confer with the administration, but only in an advisory capacity. Neither in control nor in operation is the factory communistic. The employes do not direct or choose the directors, and the general introduction of the capitalistic piece-work system makes for an enormous spread, or inequality, between the wages of skilled and unskilled laborers. In time the workers may insist on receiving in money the twenty to twenty-five per cent addition to wages now said to be represented by low rent, welfare work and social insurance. Such a demand has often balked the paternal schemes of employers in capitalist countries.

They may, but it is not likely. The factory is the social center of Russia. Everything in the system serves it, from the pre-natal care given to the children of factory workers to the Rabfacs, or workers' faculties in the universities, whereby the factory hand enjoys special advantages and is speeded ahead of others along the road to knowledge. He really believes, moreover, that

he owns the plant he works in, and if so far his lively sense of proprietorship has not stimulated production, the comparatively low output per man and machine in the Soviet factories may be due to old methods and obsolete machinery as much as to some permanent kink in the human mechanism which in other countries makes collective ownership less efficient than private ownership.

It is in the social activities carried on within the frame of the factories more than in the work itself that one catches glimmers of the workers' state as the worker conceives it. We were always guided through the plants we visited by members of the factory committee, in each case serious young men impressively conscious of their dignity as proletarians. They showed us the work shops as a matter of routine. If we paused over any particular process, a workman from the bench stepped forward to explain it with eager interest. But it was over the machinery outside that they glowed — over the mansion of the former owner turned into a day nursery for the children of working mothers, over the factory clubs, the factory schools, dispensaries, theatres, libraries, gymnasiums, athletic fields, museums of industry or of revolution. Some of these extra-factory undertakings are crude and poor enough, and the welfare schemes are no more the inventions of Bolshevism than are the factories themselves. But the workers think so; they are convinced that they are the pioneer settlers in Utopia. You are shown the commonplace public service of any Western town with the complacency manifested by all creators exhibiting their masterpieces. "Here is a health center. Have you ever seen one

before? ” we were asked when shown a pathetic little dispensary well furnished with propaganda posters but very meagerly supplied with medicaments.

The factory committee gives the worker an illusion of participation in the control of industry, and a complicated political machinery has been devised to give him a similar illusion of participation in government. The intricacies of the Soviet electoral system are difficult to understand, the more so that the purpose of its elaborate indirection is only to register unanimity in a population deprived of any choice of parties or of policies. Only the Communist Party is legal and even within the carefully restricted ranks of that disciplined brotherhood opposition is not tolerated. The paradox is that election is nullified by a solemn series of elections; the word is almost sardonically applied to a devious process of squeezing out popular representation. Beyond the first stage, the Soviets seem put in motion to give the people a means of acquiescing in their own exclusion. At the end of the line the All-Union Congress is itself only a mass meeting, with no legislative power except the power of approval of measures already decided upon by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, a group of nine men in whom all authority rests and by whom it is delegated to the farthest reaches of the federated republics, and beyond. The whole machinery, indeed, is like nothing so much as one of those ingenious mechanical toys which clever boys erect for the fun of knocking down.

The system derives from a philosophy. It is based on the conception of man as an economic atom with no

social or political status except as a producer in the narrowest sense, and of government as a club to keep one class in power. Hence the exclusion of all non-producers, employers, kulaks, priests, bourgeois, from the status of citizens. The system deals with the mass; if there is an electoral unit it is the group and not the individual. With the exception of unorganized workers like housewives, the citizen votes in his factory or workshop; every six hundred workers elect one delegate to the Moscow Soviet. I say elect, but only one list of delegates is compiled by the factory committee, in conjunction with representatives of various categories of workers, and it is final; the right to challenge or add names at the general meeting exists in theory but is never exercised. The election itself is like putting the motion to adjourn to a dull convention. "All in favor will signify by raising their hands." The workers raise their hands. "All opposed?" No one is ever opposed. The elected are not necessarily Communists. More offices exist than could possibly be filled by members of a party which numbers one half of one per cent of the population. And in any case the leaders insist on a certain number of non-party men in the lower hierarchies. The important point is that as Communists form sixty per cent of the membership of factory committees, no names are chosen without Communist approval.

In the country the unit is the village, where Communists are fewer and elections are livelier. One suspects that the village debates are mostly for diversion or protest, however, because the local affairs of the peasants are discussed, as they always have been, in the general town meeting. The chief purpose of the village Soviet



is to choose among its members those who will go to the next higher Soviet, the volost.

The local Soviets have at least the effect of being the direct creation of the populace. They perform the ordinary tasks of town councils everywhere. Their merit is in making the people believe that they start the whole system going. But after that first step all direct connection ceases between the Soviets and their constituents. Each higher Soviet is elected by the one below. The village is sifted into the volost, or parish, the volost into the uyezd, or district, the uyezd into the province, or gubernia. By that time, and this is a vital part of the process, the village is pretty well diluted by the town. In order to keep the city proletariat from being overpowered by the peasantry, or "to save the Revolution," as it is explained, the basis of representation is unequal. In the provincial congress of Soviets, one delegate is allotted for every ten thousand peasants and for every two thousand townsmen. Even so the peasants preponderate, but at this stage they have been so well winnowed that the majority in the congress is safely Communist. The revenue of the Union, like its power, is gathered to a center and thence apportioned back according to the central view of the comparative needs of the contributing provinces.

Thirty-two gubernias, exclusive of the autonomous republics and territories, form the All-Russian Federation (the RSFSR). This Federation, although it includes three-fourths of the population of what was known as Russia, — officially Russia no longer exists — is only one of the six Socialist Republics joined in the Soviet Union (the USSR). The others are the Ukraine,



White Russia, Transcaucasia (a federation of three republics), Turkomanistan and Uzbekistan. Each has its own congress of Soviets, identical in structure, and once in two years representatives of all the republics gather in Moscow for the All-Union Congress. This body is not a parliament, as we understand it, only because it is nothing else but a parliament in the literal meaning of that term. It is a wholly speech-making and resolving assembly. The Soviet system is the most admirable ever invented to allow a government to listen to public opinion without having to act on it and public opinion to express itself without effect. The All-Union Congress drains into a smaller body, the Central Executive Committee, known as the "Tsik," and this group meets two or three times a year and functions the rest of the time through the Presidium and the Council of People's Commissars. The Commissars form the cabinet actually in charge of administration; they are legislators and executives, but they are checked by their own advisory boards, or collegia, any member of which has a right to report or appeal to the whole council against his own chief.

The Commissariats of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Transport and Posts and Telegraphs are for the whole Union. The other five, Labor, Finance, Internal Trade, Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and Supreme Economic Council, exist in each republic also and represent the departments in which the autonomous states, the "voluntary association of equal peoples," are supposed to enjoy autonomy. In addition are six commissariats, Agriculture, Education, Justice, Home Affairs, Health and Social Welfare, which function

in all the republics separately but have no place in the Union cabinet.

Such in skeleton is the structure of authority erected by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. I may add that if I went on for pages more of tedious and complicating details I should still have to repeat at the end that government in Russia is the simplest and most concentrated in the world. The actual government is the Communist Party Congress working through the Politbureau. The All-Union Congress is merely a meeting of the leading Communists reporting on their work in the field. Their divergences as local administrators are overcome by their discipline as members of the Party. The autonomous republics concede liberal cultural rights to minorities but they also are governed by the Party on the party principles and their autonomy consists in freedom to administer within their own boundaries the laws and policies decided upon by the party chiefs.

Have I said that the new ruling class does not rule? Ah, but for that class the whole creation moves! All these meetings he attends and all these speeches he makes and listens to give this ruler the feel of power, and a sense of less intermittent influence in the political and economic management of his life than he gets from the irrelevant election campaigns of democracy. The Soviets tend to make the proletarian more and more interested and articulate. The dictatorship rules in his name, rules in his interest to the exclusion of the interests of all other classes, and this clothes him with authority and nourishes him with hope. It is he who is the pampered

citizen. If there is a best room in the living quarters rationed among the populace, he gets it for the lowest rent. There are not school facilities for everybody, so his children are given preference. In general he is exempt from taxes; seventy per cent of all taxes in the Moscow gubernia are paid by the sixteen per cent of the inhabitants engaged in some sort of private trade and therefore regarded as un-proletarian. He has free trips to once fashionable resorts, the best and cheapest seats at the theatre. If he commits a crime he receives the minimum penalty from the People's Court. His, in a word, is the privileged class. His is the precious privilege of criticism, denied to all other classes, and he exercises it. The state-controlled newspapers and the trade union organs are full of gibes and complaints voiced by workers against an administration of amateurs, often irritatingly cocky and self-satisfied amateurs. Try to follow up an inquiry to some official source, try to change a railroad ticket or rectify a mistake in a shop, try to get any information verified or any job done; nothing you say or are tempted to say in your most exasperated moments is half so strong as the public remarks of the sovereign worker reviling his bureaucracy.

I saw no convincing evidence that the worker is materially better off than he was before the Revolution. Assuming that his wages are increasing and that twenty-five per cent is added by social insurance and lowered rents, only a few trades are actually better paid and all must bear the doubled cost of living. The intellectual and professional workers are, of course, immeasurably worse off, but in this chapter I am dealing only with the ruling class. In all other respects, however, there is no

comparison between the status of that class to-day and its position under the Empire. Still lacking economic and political liberty, now at least it knows social freedom and the far headier and stranger thrills of social superiority.

As I circulated among the offices and planning boards of Moscow it seemed to me also that the worker is slowly developing in his own ranks a new type of official. The actual dictators in the Kremlin are not workers but professional revolutionists. Most of them have been schooled and steeled in other capitals; the Soviet Union they imagined was not national, the constitution they framed never mentioned the name of Russia, nor any field less vast than the union of the workers of all countries into a world-wide federation of Socialist Soviet Republics. The under officials, too, are not drawn from the Russian proletariat. So many have been in America, particularly those dealing with foreigners, that the impression prevails that the government ranks are filled with Jews recruited from the east side of New York. That is true only in so far as the Jews formed a natural personnel at first and are still the best brains and most efficient organizers in the ruling party. They were the intelligentsia of the Revolution, a kind of beyond-the-pale bourgeoisie, internationalists because Russia never accepted or treated them as nationals. To-day most of the young intellectuals opposing the Stalin policies are Jews and it is not without significance that the expulsion of the leaders of the Opposition, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev and the rest, leaves not a single Jew in the highest ranks of the Party or the government.

Out of the proletarian ranks are emerging the new leaders. I have mentioned the executive secretary of the Moscow Soviet. While he talked to me about city budgets and plans for the first Russian subway, I could not help contrasting his almost religious attitude toward his job, his painstaking effort to inform, with the flippancy I had met in American city halls, or the glib complacency encountered in bureaus manned by professional Communists. "Write about what you see, whether good or bad," he said. A more striking instance is his chief, Ukhanov, the young electrician who displays brilliant ability as mayor of the most complex municipality on earth. I met many such here and there, workers out of the factories, young men in blouses with shaven heads and anxious eyes who bring to public office an intensely serious sense of responsibility, sometimes a surprising competence. They represent, I believe, a newer Russia than the leaders of the Revolution, a less international and more Russian Russia. They grope toward less theoretic and more practical solutions of their stupendous problems.

In this category I include the judges I saw one morning in the People's Court. I remember how we hated to go indoors that bright September morning. The air of Moscow sparkled; it was thin and clear and light, like the autumn air on bright days on the Dakota prairies. We walked along the rough boulevard, raggedly green in the wide parked space in the middle, and noticed how many of the houses, blank-faced as the houses of French provincial towns, were being painted at last. Our guide could not find the Court. It was a building so much like all the rest, with an entrance no



different, that we passed it several times and pushed at several doors before we found the right one.

Inside the vivid day faded. What had been a fine stairway and corridor looked abandoned to its fate. So many places in Russia have that discouraged don't-care air, the effect of a neglect so widespread that it is contagious. We made our way upstairs through dispirited crowds of people into a big room filled with benches. On a raised platform at one end at a table covered with red bunting sat a tired man in a cotton blouse. That was the judge. Beside him, one on each side, were two solemn workmen. They were the jury, I think they are called assessors, and with the judge they decide on the verdict and the punishment. A woman clerk at one end of the platform kept the record. That was all. There were no formalities, nothing to suggest the majesty of the law.

The law, for that matter, has no majesty in Russia. That is one of the bourgeois traditions the proletariat sets out to smash by its simplified and non-legalistic judicial system. The first qualification for a judge is that he has never been a lawyer. He may not serve on the bench all the time. The assessors are chosen from the factories by a workers' committee and are on duty only for a week. The one lawyer at the three trials I attended that morning was an attorney for the defense who was present with some "experts" in a case involving a charge of scamping on a government building contract. The prisoners in all cases sat in the front rows with the spectators. One was a convict accused of attacking a woman doctor in prison; in the next room three officials were on trial for stealing trade union funds.



Trials for theft, I was told, are the commonest in the calendar, despite the fact that after counter-revolution it is the most serious of all crimes. Murder is not a capital offense under the Soviet code but embezzlement is. Yet although the thieves are robbing themselves and the general living standard is so low and public that not much luxury can be bought with stolen money, the old Adam dies hard. Profiteering is almost as common as it is difficult and the most reckless risks are taken for small gains. Gain remains, indeed, a strongly actuating motive in life. It is even encouraged. The state lottery, or lottery loan, urges acquisitiveness; so does the government guarantee (necessary after the confiscation of all bank deposits in the Revolution) that bank savings are safe and the contents of safety deposit boxes absolutely personal and secret. "Oh, I suppose the Gay-Pay-Oo knows what you have in the bank," shrugged the worker who told me this, "but everybody else can't be snooping around."

The People's Courts are frankly in favor of the ruling class. They boast that they have one justice for the proletariat and another for the bourgeoisie. They make their own precedents and are unencumbered by technicalities; above all things they scorn the dead letter of the old law. And the workman judges are in fact extremely gentle, patient, even conversational, with the erring workers come to judgment. They examine each offender as a priest might probe in the confessional, trying to understand his motives, his background, primarily what part he has taken in the Revolution. One youth from Odessa described his activity in the workers' struggle with great animation. The judge listened with

mounting interest, the audience leaned forward, even the two Red soldiers on guard came to life. It was plain that the hero was pleading the most weighty of extenuating circumstances. Nevertheless, he had stolen systematically from his comrades, poor workers like himself. The mild eyes behind the red table were troubled.

It was a strange atmosphere for a court. The impression it made was of immature minds struggling with ideas, puzzled to know what to substitute for abandoned sanctions, evolving solutions different, certainly, from those of the past, but different, too, from those they had been led to expect. In the old days the people always spoke of the ruling caste as "They." "They" were another breed, remote, inscrutable and dangerous. I saw in the People's Court how consciously the ruling class to-day is "We." "We," said the judge to the prisoner, referring to their common lot. The shabby court room was swept by the current of class solidarity. "We," repeated the judge, and shook his head sadly.

On these lower rungs of experiment, where the comrades grapple directly with primary problems for which there is no rule in Marx, they are not finding rulership so simple as it sounded in the slogans. The atmosphere of the court room was heavy and dark compared to the sunshine outside. The windows, as usual, were murky. Dimly I perceived that the new ruling caste was learning. Remember that in all these observations I have confined myself to the three or four million class-conscious industrial workers who alone in Russia have even the illusion of authority. That proletarian minority will no more easily relinquish the power

it has gained than would any intrenched interest anywhere. It is learning, without doubt, but just what it is learning and to what final form of government human as well as economic determinism will lead it, the worried workers and their dictators in the Kremlin know as little as I.

COMMISSARS OF THE PEOPLE

IT WAS Trotsky who suggested People's Commissars as a name for the department heads of the Soviet government. Lenin considered it for an instant with the characteristic screwing up of his left eye which gave him the look of a shrewd peasant trader, and then nodded in a swift decisiveness equally characteristic. He found it simple and revolutionary, therefore appropriate. For a similar reason he approved the name of Petrograd and would never have changed it. He was fond of remarking that as Peter the Great was the first revolutionary dictator, the credit for building the first Western city in Russia should not be taken away from him.

Lenin's successors have not inherited his sense of the appropriate, or the cognate sense of the ridiculous. They

seem incapable of the relaxation that in him was expressed in laughter. He is described as serene, even gay, a leader without doubts; "carefree" is the surprising word his biographers use of him. Through the cruelest and most critical hours of the Revolution rings the startling sound of his laughter. The present leaders, on the contrary, are tense and nervous. They are terribly excited over themselves as innovators and trail-blazers. They talk feverishly, smoke furiously and incessantly. The government offices are always thick with smoke and littered with the long paper butts of Russian cigarettes. Nearly all the Commissars are in weakened health; they work hard, and have no life outside their work. They live, with few exceptions, in one or other of the old buildings in the half regal and half ecclesiastical compound enclosed by the walls of the Kremlin. Only on the most extraordinary occasions do they appear in public. Accustomed to anonymity and the underground life of conspirators, in the open they are restless and ill at ease.

Lenin laughed. In his glass case under the Kremlin wall, that tent of the usurper pitched at the palace gate, even now he looks as if he might rend the heavy gloom with laughter, as if he might wake to laugh at himself. At every turn you meet those sharp, half-mocking eyes peering out of a homely, humorous face as Eurasian as Russia itself, Mongolian in the flat wide cheek bones and typically Slavic in the mobile mouth and bearded chin. No figure in the street is half so real and familiar as the stocky little man in a cap with one hand thrust in his pocket and the other extended to clinch the point of a perpetual argument. Russia is the heaven of the soap



box orator, and in that stereotyped figure is the soap box orator at last dynamic and unanswerable. But the triumph of his argument is not enough to account for the aliveness of Lenin. He is still the chief Commissar. His words are the words you always hear. His ideas have the authority of laws and proverbs; they are laws and proverbs. He had a substance to reduce his successors to shadows, and such force that although the Revolution was already made when he arrived on the scene, he seems now to have unseated the Tsar and overturned the world singlehanded. Ten years ago regarded as an irresponsible terrorist let loose by Germany, before his death he was held capable of using both Germany and Russia for his purpose. Only in Russia, however, can be felt the full glamour of this man who so eclipsed his own doctrine that people believed in him who doubted and detested what he taught.

Russians who know nothing of the gospel according to Marx understand Lenin; you often hear the peasants invoking Lenin to damn the Bolsheviks. He had the irresistible mastery which a man of action, of ruthless will, a man who knows where he is going, exerts in a crisis over the vague, the irresolute and the unstable. And Lenin understood Russia. One secret of his influence was that he was able to sense so surely what phrases would sway the mind of the Russian masses. Thus by the spell of a great individual was the collective man called into being; when the visitor from abroad feels strange and a little frightened in the presence of that embryonic monster he turns instinctively to Lenin for reassurance of the power of personality.

There are no such personalities among the Commissars to-day. The quicksilver charm of Trotsky, next to Lenin in genius and with superior gifts as a spell-binder, is swallowed up in the echoless spaces of Asia. He is in a sense a victim of self-assertion, the screw turning in the machine. Banished with him are Zinoviev and Kamenev, only yesterday opposing Trotsky and sharing with Stalin the leadership of the Communist Party. I saw Zinoviev passing, so to speak. He was hurrying through Trotsky's reception room the day the former Soviet war lord was preparing to leave the post as head of the Foreign Concessions Committee which he held until a short time before his exile. Zinoviev is the unpleasant type of demagogue. In that anxious hour his fat face was flabby and drawn, like a pricked balloon, the face of an orator emptied of the wind that filled it. From under lowered eyelids he glanced furtively around the room before he entered, a man used to surveillance and to looking before he leaped. Like Trotsky himself and Rakovsky, the smooth and agreeable Bulgarian recalled from Paris, like Paul Radek, the brilliant Galician propagandist, Zinoviev rebelled against the rigid self-subordination exacted by Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee. When Trotsky and his five hundred followers were ejected at the end of 1927, the Party discarded the group which was in a double sense internationalist. The Opposition not only chafed against the "Russian policy" of Stalin but it included the foreigners in the inner councils and the Russians in closest contact with the outside world and most conscious of its manners and its modes of thought. They had all lived in democratic countries; they scorn the

democratic formulas, but their suggestive demand was for the right of free speech, not for the masses, of course, but for themselves. With Stalin stood Rykov, loyal follower and nominal successor of Lenin as Premier. Rykov is an economic expert, but his poor health and stammering speech make him unimpressive as a popular leader. Stalin's strongest upholder was Bukharin, redoubtable editor of the *Pravda* and head of the Comintern (Communist International), at forty the youngest and after Trotsky the most dramatic and fiery of the Party chiefs. When the smoke of battle cleared, the Central Executive Committee was more Russian than it had been before, more unanimous and more unquestionably under the cool domination of Stalin.

Joseph Stalin is neither a Russian nor a Commissar. But he controls the policies of all the Commissars and more than any other man he governs Russia. He is the sphinx of Soviet politics, the antithesis of the pungent and magnetic Trotsky. Like Lenin, he does not care for the gallery. He could say, as Lenin once said, when Trotsky begged him to consider something he did or said in the light of history, "Damn history! Let it take care of itself." Stalin was born in a village at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains in the Tiflis gubernia, the son of a cobbler. He studied for the Orthodox priesthood in his youth but was expelled from the seminary because even then he was a reader and preacher of Marx. Since the age of seventeen he has been a professional revolutionist; down in Georgia his old peasant mother boasts that she worked eighteen hours a day in order that her son might not have to follow

any other trade. His real name is Djughashvili. All the revolutionists have had so many aliases in the course of their hunted careers that they have a choice of names. Some, like Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, have adopted Russian versions of their Jewish patronymics. Stalin calls himself "steel;" evidently he likes to think of himself as a man of steel, strong, cold and inflexible. In his room in the Kremlin and his guarded office on the top floor of the Party headquarters, he leads a cloistered and secret life. Few people in Moscow have ever seen him and fewer still know anything about him. Is he married? Who are his friends? Nobody I asked could answer. His quiet even voice is never heard over the radio, and the panther-like movement of his soldierly figure is never seen on the screen. He is a political boss in the best old tradition, omnipotence in the background, with no oracle.

Stalin seldom speaks, but like all strong, silent men, when he does there is no stopping him. Once at a party caucus he delivered a "keynote" speech five and a half hours long. He makes it a rule to grant no interviews; neither the diplomats nor the journalists in Moscow have ever talked to him. Yet last summer he gave an interview to an American labor delegation which lasted six hours. The delegation was unofficial but it was the first of its kind to visit Moscow, and Stalin's reception was significant of the importance attached by the Communist Party to American opinion. Through the courtesy of the Americans I was fortunate enough to be present at this record-breaking interview, and I have never seen a politician so anxious to be explicit, so little inclined to be cryptic or laconic, as the

proverbially taciturn head of the most powerful party in the world.

When we arrived at the Party headquarters, we were all carefully scrutinized and shot up in detachments to the top floor. A Red soldier waited at the landing and after the whole party had assembled the door was opened from within and we were guided through several ante-chambers into a large light room like a directors' room in a bank. Stalin entered at once and took his place at the head of a long mahogany table. The "rudeness" Lenin complained of is probably the roughness of his steam-roller methods. His manner as he greeted us was affable and self-possessed, almost gentle, and in contrast to the carelessness affected by many Bolsheviks, he was trim and well groomed in his neat khaki uniform. He does not look Russian at all, but Turkish; he reminded me of no one so much as Mustapha Kemal or Ahmet Zogu, the young mountain chief who is president of Albania. Stalin, too, as he took out his black pipe and ordered rounds of tea and plates of thick caviar sandwiches, was like an Oriental tribal chief dispensing hospitality. The Caucasus is in him and the mountains, in his easy vigor, the glance of his quick eyes, in some core of calmness which he shares with Lenin. He was the steadiest and most assured of all the Soviet leaders I saw. In the thick of the last bitter battle with the Opposition he was unworried; under the tedious ordeal of the long pauses in a translated interview he was not fidgety. His low brow was clear under a squarish brush of black hair that made his head oddly cubist. His smile was frequent and genial but it was the reserved smile of the East rather than the open smile



of the West. The Slavs in the Communist councils are dominated by something much more immovable than themselves.

Lacking brilliance, Stalin gives an impression of craft and suppleness. He is the shrewd manipulator, quietly obstinate, ruthless without passion. Trotsky is the agitator, bold and vivid, and Stalin is the organizer, composed and wary. They would make an excellent team if they could work together as once they went together into exile and as together they seized the power from Kerensky in 1917. But there is now deep personal rancor as well as political opposition between the two. Trotsky had followers, had at one time and may have still, for all any one knows, the biggest popular following of any of the Soviet chiefs, but he never had a machine. Stalin has no popular following; he is a machine politician. When he served as Lenin's secretary it was said of him: "Lenin trusts Stalin, but Stalin trusts nobody." When he became Secretary of the Party the office was a kind of secretariate, and no member of the staff had any outstanding influence or importance. Stalin saw its strategic possibilities, and before long had the title of Secretary General and the control of the Party organization throughout the Union.

This was made easy for him by the fact that he has never been away from Russia. While the other leaders were in exile he directed the work at home. Thus he kept close to the revolutionary rank and file; when Lenin and the rest came rushing back after the Kerensky *coup d'état* had made Petersburg safe for revolutionaries, Stalin was already on the ground and had his organization ready. And since the success of the



Bolsheviks was the success of an efficient and disciplined organization in the midst of chaos, he probably deserves a larger share of the credit for this success than has ever been given to him. He is a fighter as well as an organizer. He spent eight years of his life in prison or in Siberia, and since the Revolution, in addition to serving from 1917 to 1923 on the supreme steering committee of five, he fought as an officer in the Civil War against Yudenitch, Denikin and the Poles. Like most soldiers and political bosses Stalin has a streak of sentimentality. He has been observed weeping over revolutionary melodrama.

The Bolshevik chief answered questions like a teacher. He was bland and patient. When he seemed to be evasive at great length, as in response to a query in regard to the possibility of a legal, proletarian opposition to the Communist Party, it was because of inability to understand the questioners' point of view rather than a desire to quibble. Referring to the relations between Moscow and the American Communist Party, he said he presumed the Third International rendered assistance to the American Communists when necessary. As far as the Russian Party was concerned he did not recall that it had ever been asked for help, but he added frankly that if it were asked it would certainly give whatever aid it could in the fight against capitalism. He was equally careful to clarify his answer when asked to explain the Party attitude toward religion. After stating that atheism was not, formally speaking, a condition of membership, which would have served for most politicians, he went on to say that the Party is not and cannot be neutral toward religion and "conducts prop-

aganda against all and every religious prejudice." "Cases occur," he said, "when certain members of the Party hamper the complete development of anti-religious propaganda. If such members are expelled it is a good thing because there is no room for such 'Communists' in the ranks of our Party."

As Commissar of Nationalities, Stalin organized the administration of the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union. A suppressed Georgian under the Tsar, he believes in racial autonomy, under rigid Party control, and the federal system worked out by him, while more centralist than I had imagined, more centralist than the federal constitution of the United States, is an interesting and valuable contribution to the science of government. In the Russian federation all the different races retain their own languages, their own culture and a good share of their own government. The Holy Roman Empire, its only predecessor, was bound together by a common religion; the Soviet Union is united by the thread of Communism. It is true that the thread is at present a steel thread kept taut by a man of steel, and that the plan, primarily a plan for world government, is as loose and vague as is the Soviet Constitution itself. The forced revival of lost tongues seems an inconsistent policy on the part of fanatic internationalists, and Stalin's native state of Georgia has paid heavily to learn that freedom to leave the Union is only a phrase. If and when, however, the revolution is ever thought to be over in Russia, the federal plan has possibilities of developing the freedom in union which I have heard an eminent Czech statesman sigh for as the only formula for the salvation of Europe.

Sooner or later every government seems to raise up the man who personifies it. Lenin incarnated the Revolution and Stalin embodies the present phase of proletarian dictatorship. On the whole he has followed a cautious and constructive course. He has leaned to the Russian in contradistinction to the internationalist policy, although actually he is less realist internationally than Trotsky, whose nostalgia for the world stimulates his impatience for world revolution. The questions he begged leave to put to his interviewers showed considerable knowledge of the status of labor organizations in the United States and a complete and complacent ignorance of the conditions of life and the psychology of the "American proletariat." Stalin listened, however, as carefully as he talked. Far from wilting under the long grill, which was lengthened by his own wish, he seemed to get fresher every minute.

As I watched and listened during the steady six-hour flow of question and answer, what impressed me most was the something untranslatable in all the translations. Interviewers and interviewed were epochs apart in their approach to the relationship between capital and labor and between man and man. Stalin got no inkling of the American point of view; perhaps the Americans got no real comprehension of his, but at least they were making more effort to understand than the Communists would ever apply to the study of American philosophy and institutions. Nowhere more than in those exchanges was I conscious of the difficulty of interpreting the heady blend of futurism and archaism, of something newer than the West superimposed on something older than the East, which is

Bolshevist Russia. Stalin of the Caucasus, chief of the Communists, expresses all that cannot be translated. He might almost be that Occident in person.

Michael Kalinin, president of the Union, was one of the political prisoners released by the February revolution. He is always referred to as the peasant ruler of the biggest peasant empire in the world, but he is a peasant by birth rather than by virtue of labor in the fields. As a boy he was a servant in the house of a *barina* near his native village in the Tver province. There he taught himself to read and write, was sent to school by his employer, and in her library found the books which started him on the path of revolution. Except for a few days as a metal turner in the Putilov works in Petersburg, most of his adult life has been spent in prison and in exile. It is not by chance, however, that the peasants identify him with themselves, or that he is the Commissar most accessible to the people and oftenest seen in public. It is always Kalinin who travels through the country on political excursions and presides at special meetings of provincial Soviets. Of all the Communist officials, I think he is the most popular and the best understood in non-Communist Russia. Peasant or not, he is in fact a true mujik, simple, intelligent, shrewd, reflective. His eyes, blue and clear in a net of wrinkles, are peasant's eyes. His shock of light hair and his untidy beard distinguish him from the shaven Bolsheviks of the towns. He is of the Russian soil and of the north, and, therefore — perhaps one must have been in Russia to feel this — of the West, and legible as Stalin is not.

I came upon Kalinin on one of the mornings when

he receives all the people who gather to lay grievances and petitions before him. The big bare hall swarmed with peasants; there were no townfolk in that earthy, milling crowd. Pushing my way through to a cleared space in the middle, I was not at first aware that the little man in a blue blouse in the middle of a group of peasants was the President of the Union. He looked no different from the others. In his quality of court of last appeal, he bent down to listen to the agonized prayer of a woman begging on her knees for the life of her husband. He was shaking his head as I approached and the woman fell screaming to the floor. The terrible screams fell upon us like whips as two Red soldiers dragged her away.

As I followed Kalinin upstairs to his office, he was visibly upset and troubled. His blue eyes were worried when he turned to me and he started talking as if to himself. "Many people and governments think we are going the wrong way," he said, "but our goal is the happiness of the people. Whatever you say of us give us credit for that. We in the government work only for that end. We get no profit out of office or power."

The President of the Soviet Union is a good man, one feels, kindly, anxious, desperately sincere. He has never traveled, he is not credited with any great gifts, but he seems more conscious of the human world and the world outside than any Commissar I met. He spoke many times of America. Once he said that he wished the United States had more of Russia's idealism and Russia more of American practicality. And again that one defect of his people was that they took no thought for the morrow. "We need to develop thrift," he said,



"teach the Russians to save money." How many harassed chancellors in debt-burdened Europe I have heard sighing so over American lack of idealism, and how many wise kulaks over the improvidence of their neighbors. I had to remind myself that this yearning for idealism in America came from the titular head of a system dedicated to militant materialism, and that the preacher of thrift and the savings-bank view of the future was the President of the Commune.

Kalinin conversed as many Russians do, as if he were thinking aloud. His thoughts furrowed his forehead and clouded his eyes, and he twitched with nervousness as he spoke. He rolled and threw away one cigarette after another, he pulled at his blue peasant's blouse, he cleaned his fingernails with a penknife, he kept getting up and sitting down. "Don't think I want you to go," he murmured. "It's just that I can't sit still."

At the end of the conversation he mentioned America again. He said he did not think the economic policy of the United States had proved a success. He was under the impression that life in America, in spite of our prosperity, was harder and less happy than it was a hundred years ago, when wealth was more divided. "Americans would not be so strained and nervous," he concluded, while he tore a cigarette into shreds, "if they were not so afraid of the future."

Tomsky's name is also Michael and the head of all the labor unions in Russia is as typical a representative of the town proletariat as Kalinin is of the peasantry. Although both worked in the mills of Petersburg and both have made a career of revolution, Tomsky part of

the time as printer and editor of *The Worker's Flag*, the Commissar of Labor belongs to the city as unmistakably as Kalinin belongs to the village. Together they symbolize the factory and the field as graphically as do the hammer and the sickle of the Soviet emblem. "When the scythe strikes the rock" is Russian for coming up against a stone wall, and the rock which breaks the force of the peasant drive in Russia to-day is the strength of organized labor. Kalinin is the peasant president of a peasant land, but the effective power in that land is the trade unions, mobilized by Tomskey into an army ten million strong. Tomskey is thus the Commissar who carries the real weight of the Revolution. As the spokesman of the organized workers he, next to Stalin, exerts the greatest influence in the Politbureau. "If the Soviet trade unions did not support the government," he declares, "the government would disappear. If the leaders did not represent the workers the leaders also would disappear."

The man who wields the hammer is a quiet little man, sharp-eyed and nimble-witted, deaf but fluent as all Russians are fluent. He was punctual to the dot for his appointment in a country in which punctuality is the rarest of virtues. Although he was leaving the next morning for a month's hunting in the northern forests, and was so tired that his face was pasty and gray as the faded tunic he wore, he had plenty of time for the fullest answers to any number of questions. To him, as to all Soviet officials, an interview is not perfunctory. They are all extraordinarily eager to teach. Tomskey looked years older than his forty-seven years. As he slumped behind his cleared mahogany desk in his airy office in the

Labor Palace, he might have been a weary old woman in an embroidered linen blouse.

He called for his own interpreter, once a journalist in New York, to take the place of ours, and seemed more at ease when the rapid stream of Russian flowed with the same speed and smoothness into English. The resourceful Melnichansky, also from New York, now president of the Moscow Council of trade unions and guide and friend of all Americans, strolled in and out during the interview and amplified and Americanized one or two of the points made by his chief. As he talked, Tomsky's tired blue eyes kindled. Once, when he jumped up to emphasize an argument, he was suddenly transformed into the fiery agitator whose heat welds together the most efficient organization in Russia.

We spoke of the Fascist labor syndicates as compared to the Communist trade unions, but I do not think it was that which drew his fire. He said that the Soviet unions were fundamentally more democratic and referred to the elective system whereby the will of each union is "hierarchically" delegated to the All-Union executive body. I noted the word because it is the same the Italians use in describing their system and because in both organizations the hierarchies lead but to one all-controlling Party. Tomsky was only contemptuously interested in the Fascists. He was impatient of all outside palliatives and half-measures. When some one mentioned that all the doubting Thomases seemed to be Socialist labor leaders — Thomas of England, Thomas of France, head of the International Labor Office, Norman Thomas of the United States — the Russian Thomas bridled a little. "The names are similar, but not the men," he remarked.

What interested him was the position of the worker under Communism. Although he must have to develop this theme daily, he rose to it with a fresh fervor that literally burned away his fatigue. He described how the equilibrium between supply and demand can be maintained when the state controls both labor and capital. He went into the causes of unemployment — partly, of course, the result of the policy of England; every evil in Russia is the fault of some foreign power — and boasted that industry continued to expand in spite of all handicaps. In the course of some inquiries on labor conditions I asked what was the compensation in an equalitarian society for those who still must toil at inhuman labor, like mining and stoking, and shoulder the jobs that nobody wants. He answered that in Russia such workers have a six- instead of an eight-hour day. If the occupation is injurious to health they are given special care and a preventive diet. “And also,” he added, with the sigh of an over-taxed man to whom rest seems the prime reward, “they have longer vacations, a month instead of two weeks.”

What zeal they have, these Communists! Everything in Tomsky was exhausted save his ardor for the cause; that was more convincing than anything he said. Listening, one forgets that the workers’ heaven its preachers paint is more apocalyptic than the heaven they have torn down. Most of the time they forget it themselves.

In Moscow I gathered all the biographical data I could find relating to the heads of the various branches of the government. I was curious, as every student of

Russia must be curious, about the history and background of men who rose suddenly out of the catacombs, outcasts and exiles, to this audacious and unlimited dictatorship. I soon found that the life stories of the revolutionists are almost identical; with the change of a date here and a place there the same summary of imprisonment, escape, exile and return would serve for all. Almost without exception the men now in power are members of the same little band who lived dangerously together in Siberian villages and in back rooms in foreign capitals. Not one has ever had any sort of preparation or experience for the immense administrative jobs they now assume.

Anatol Lunacharsky, for instance, who looks so little like a revolutionist and so much like a dilettante professor, a Minister of Fine Arts anywhere, has survived adventures similar to those of all other Russian rebels. His exile, it is true, was spent in Italy and in Paris as a lecturer in the Russian People's University. He was not always a Bolshevik. There was a time between the 1905 and the 1917 revolutions when he deserted the left wing of the Social Democratic Party and criticized it vigorously on philosophical grounds. He is suspected of not being wholly in agreement now with all its prescriptions and excommunications. It was Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, most influential assistant in the Commissariat of Education, who was responsible for the famous "Index" which included in an endless list of forbidden books Plato's "Republic" — to which naïve foreign enthusiasts have compared the Communist state! — and the works of Kant, Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer and Nietzsche.



Lunacharsky is not entirely trusted by the more radical Communists, who fear, with reason, the unpredictable vagaries of the artistic temperament. He is known to look tenderly upon the art of the past and rather wryly upon the orthodox doctrine of the complete submergence of the individual in the mass. Like Lenin a petty bourgeois by origin, he has been accused, as Lenin never could have been, of bourgeois tastes. Poet, dramatist, connoisseur, man of the world, Lunacharsky is perhaps the only skeptic among the old believers. He can be bored, he can be detached and critical. He is subject to doubts and disillusionments almost fatal to a good Communist. Yet he has done the most thorough-going communistic job of all the Commissars. As head of the Department of Education since 1917, his is the tremendous task of communizing the mind of Russia. The commission was given him by Lenin, who even enlarged the scope of the commissariate to make Lunacharsky custodian and censor of all the arts. As far back as the nineties, in his student days, he started the "proletcults" he has now extended until proletarian culture is hardly less arrogant than German "Kultur" used to be.

Lunacharsky is a full-fashioned man with a pointed beard. In a suit of brown tweeds with a tie carefully chosen to match, he was the only Soviet official I saw who looked as if he knew or cared what he had on. He is the least ascetic of the Commissars. He leans back in a big leather chair and talks dutifully, if you insist, of education. He says that what the Soviet schools have been able to borrow from other countries they have had to cut and fit into the communist conception of life.

The Dalton plan, for instance, is in Russia the Reformed Dalton plan, applied to groups instead of to individuals — sometimes, he remarks, with weird and wonderful results. The co-operative schools of Hamburg and Berlin have served as models, but also with many modifications. Russia has thrown overboard the classics, jurisprudence, theology and many more of the useless subjects that overweight the curriculum in other countries. Not that the Soviet curriculum is yet balanced or definite; far from it. If I could go around I would see how disordered and inadequate it still is.

Religion is a more interesting topic to the Commissar of Education. The efficient evangelical sects doing missionary work in Russia amuse him; he approves of their assaults on Orthodoxy in the belief that they help to destroy the old superstitions and are not in themselves dangerous because not mystical or picturesque enough to satisfy the people. He shrugs over the censorship. It hardly applies to art, he says, painting, sculpture or architecture, and only about one per cent of the books written are debarred from publication by the censors. He concedes that the existence of a censorship prevents some books from being written, but declares that it is in full vigor only for the stage and the cinema. He does not say so, but I gather that he regrets the necessity of a dramatic censorship. A passionate experimentalist, — he really warms when he talks about art — he would enjoy an opportunity to play with ideas as freely as the Russian stage, thanks to government subsidy, is able to play with artistic mechanics. He was responsible for two or three productions faintly “off-color” — the color in this case being Red — that had to be withdrawn

from the boards last year in deference to Communist scruples.

In the development of the museum system Lunacharsky has been allowed full swing. He speaks of the accomplishment in this field with more satisfaction than of anything he has done. In other departments he is depressed by the black gulf between the plan and the achievement. All the Communists who were white-hot in the nineties have their dark hours watching the dream come true, Lunacharsky more than most. He likes to see foreigners — perhaps because with them he can still plan largely for the future.

George Tchicherin first appeared upon the international scene when he replaced Trotsky as chief negotiator at Brest-Litovsk. He concluded the peace with the Germans and since then has been the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. There are no cabinet crises or general elections and hence few changes in the personnel of the Soviet Government. Except for those removed by death or the recent expulsions, the first drastic decapitations in the high command, the Commissars and the party rulers have remained the same from the beginning.

The Bolsheviks had no diplomats to choose from when they staffed their Foreign Office. Tchicherin alone of the Commissars comes from the aristocracy; he belongs to a family of diplomats and served for a few years in his youth in a minor post in the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Aside from that, however, he had no diplomatic experience. His career paralleled that of the other revolutionaries. He was thirty-three when

he joined the Bolsheviks in 1905, stirred, as were many Russians of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, by the Tsar's brutal repression of the workers' deputations. Since that time he has been one of the most active of revolutionists. He was banished not only from his own country but from Germany and also from England, where he worked many years as a Socialist agitator. He has the fluency in foreign languages characteristic of the Russian aristocrat and the manner that impressed the assembled diplomats at the Genoa Conference almost more than his adroitness. Even in Russia Tchicherin is not addressed as "Comrade" or "Citizen." You do not even call him "Mister." Instinctively you say "Your Excellency" and he bows as all Excellencies do.

Since Genoa Tchicherin has attended no more foreign conferences. He is a sick man, and overworked, and that duty is delegated to Maxim Litvinov, vice-Commissar for the West. Karakhan, former Soviet ambassador to China, is vice-Commissar for the East. Litvinov leaps into the international arena with a good deal of gusto. For the suave and simple manner of his chief he substitutes a rough aggressiveness, occasionally pompous, the Soviet version of shirtsleeve diplomacy. This rudeness is especially marked towards England, where Litvinov, like Tchicherin, passed most of his revolutionary exile and where he married his English wife, Ivy Low, a clever radical, niece of a former Lord Mayor of London. Because of this English taint the Litvinovs must be especially emphatic in their Bolshevism. They preside over the entertainments given to the diplomats and foreign celebrities who come to Moscow. Tchicherin seldom appears at these odd functions, where dress clothes are

considered ostentatious, but feasts in the most extravagant imperial tradition are spread on confiscated gold and silver plate. The Litvinovs and Karakhan live, simply enough, in the gorgeously furnished palace of a former sugar king where these receptions are held. Tchicherin lives alone, in meagre rooms and in the most austere manner. His only luxury is a piano, on which he plays Scriabin.

He works at night. The Foreign Office is housed haphazardly in a big, run-down business block at the corner of the Lubyanka and the Kusnetsky Most. There is the foreign press bureau where the keen and twinkling little chief, Fedor Rothstein, another New Yorker, occasionally treats the news-hungry visitors to dispatches from the world that do not get into the *Pravda* and the *Izvestia*. By the time Tchicherin begins his "day" all the other offices in the spreading building are closed and dark. A dim light burns in one doorway on the Lubyanka side. A soldier guards the locked elevator and you send up your name before ascending to the quiet top floor where the Foreign Minister toils all night with changing shifts of anxious secretaries.

My appointment was for half past eleven the night before I left Moscow, but for nearly an hour after that I sat waiting in the thickly curtained ante-room. The room was rather like an old-fashioned hotel parlor, tasteless and dreary, and one had a sense of discomfort under the hard, unblinking gaze of a Red soldier standing at the door with a gun on his shoulder. The guard changed during the vigil but never for an instant did the watching eyes relax. The quiet was so funereal that the two



Americans spoke in whispers or sat in silence on a stiff sofa.

The Commissar apologized for the delay when at last the guarded door opened and we stepped into a big shadowy room warmed by a stream of light from a lamp on the desk. His owl-like round face was flushed and there were puffs under his eyes, but his gaze was sharp and clear and he was as fresh and alert as if it were nine o'clock in the morning. He wore a morning coat, a little shabby, but correct, and we sat at our ease in deep comfortable chairs and talked about the world at large. We might have been in any Foreign Office except that in this one we were made to feel more welcome and more sequestered.

Tchicherin will not allow himself to be quoted and therefore talks frankly and freely in an English a little accented but beautifully exact and well chosen. He has a way of interviewing his interviewers; instead of talking about Soviet diplomacy we found ourselves answering shrewd questions about political conditions in the countries in which we had been traveling. He spoke at length about American recognition, a subject which no responsible Soviet official ever failed to broach. Tchicherin was particularly curious about the attitude of Mr. Hoover. He seemed puzzled that anyone knowing Russia under the Bolsheviks should not regard their government as stable and respectable. When subversive propaganda was mentioned, in reviewing the stock reasons for the American policy, the Foreign Minister sighed. He intimated that the Soviet government could not give guarantees for the Third International, but pointed out that communism was stronger in Germany

before diplomatic relations were established than it had been since.

In common with Stalin, Tchicherin wondered why business men and "bourgeois politicians," like Senator Borah, are more favorable than labor leaders to recognition of the Soviets. He suggested that the visitors most wanted in Russia were not workers' delegations but bankers and senators. The reason for this is not only because the foreign relations most necessary at the moment are banking relations, but because exploring capitalists are often more sympathetic than visiting workers.

It is easy to see why. One group is surveying a field for investment and the other a field for labor. To the adventurous investor an undeveloped continent like Russia looks as tempting as the bright apples of Eden. It looks different to those who have goods to sell; they know that so long as present policies hold and the monopoly of foreign trade is rigidly controlled by the government, recognition and increased capital will only aid Russia to keep on excluding foreign merchandise. It is a still different matter for those whose commodity is labor; to them the Russian market, for all its social and political promise, cannot compare with the markets outside. Moreover, a society organized according to the Russian plan, the whole population mobilized, mechanized and communized, would be the ideal working machine for capitalist exploitation. I recall talking to a Socialist in Italy about the Corporations law. "Ah, if we ever inherit this government," he said, "what an instrument ready made is this for Socialism!" The capitalist must have something of the same yearning as he views the collective.

Tchicherin is almost as invisible as Stalin. He is the Commissar linking the Kremlin with the governments of the world, and he lives in a little pool of electric light above the darkness of Moscow and never sees his capital. He exiles himself in the night. To say that his office might be any Foreign Office is to describe it as aloof from Russia. It is aloof, and Tchicherin is the loneliest and least enviable of all the Commissars. He has to deal with the world in the name of the government of Russia and he is constantly embarrassed and balked in his dealings by the equivocal position of that government as a subordinate department of the Communist Party. It would take a cleverer man than he, and he is very clever, to keep peace between the nations of the earth and the Third International. He is helplessly impaled on the sharp horns of the ultimate communist dilemma. And so he creates a little padded cell where he can concentrate alone on his ineluctable problems. Tchicherin is the aristocrat serving the proletariat, a gallant and solitary gentleman who lives frugally and plays Scriabin for company, alienated from the old world by his principles and from the new by his tastes.

## THE PEASANT

THE PEASANT, when all is said, is Russia. He is the old Ursa Major in this new whirl of shooting suns. He continues to point the North Star to its immemorial course. Russia is the largest peasant empire in the world; to-day it is more peasant than ever because of the toll taken by the Revolution from the upper strata of the towns. Less than 15,000,000 Russians live in cities. Less than 4,000,000 of the 10,000,000 organized workers are actually engaged in industry. More than four-fifths of all the far-flung brood of peoples gathered into the Union of Soviet Republics are peasants.

That is the central paradox in a spinning circle of paradoxes. Here is a communism made possible by the

desire to possess land, and a peasant emerging from feudalism to become human material for the most reckless experimentation in modern history. If anything could be more contradictory than Marxism riding into reality and power on the backs of peasants, it is the attempt to try out on this land-hungry and religious rustic, the man with the hoe at his most primitive, a purely industrial and materialistic theory that no one has ever dared to apply to the industrial and materialistic civilization for which it was invented. The result is the most thundering paradox of all: behold this peasant demanding from communism less communism than he has ever known before, demanding and receiving from a socialist government guarantees of land tenure and private profit impossible under the Mir system of the past.

The peasant is Russia, and overwhelms Russia, so that it is nowhere possible to get away from him. He makes villages of the biggest cities. What gives their special character to Moscow, Kiev, even Leningrad, is that half the people in the streets are casuals from the country. The peasant wanders; he is still a nomad, a creature of pilgrimages and excursions, harnessed to rather than rooted in the soil. With his bursting bundles and his pack of ragged bedding, in rough and earth-stained clothes, he always looks as if he had just dropped his plough on an impulse to range the world. He crowds the "hard" trains night and day; from one end of the country to the other the railway stations are the swarming inns in which he eats, sleeps and ruminates. He is always on the way and his gaze is never held by anything he sees; it is turned inward in a kind of torpid revery. His villages, zigzags of casually thatched roofs and sag-



ging houses, in the north like the abandoned log cabins of early American settlers, in the south built of rubble or of stone, resemble camps in which a century or two of squatting is of no matter where there is so much space and time. Unlike the tight and tired villagers of Western Europe, he has not yet settled in. It is a mistake to think of him as traditional except in the sense that nature is traditional. He has never owned enough or learned enough, I think, to be really conservative.

He is young — young as his eyes, which are the youngest and bluest in the modern world. Such eyes sometimes stare out of medieval paintings; in that time, too, there were men young enough to turn from cruelty and terror and still look blank and innocent. The peasant is a child, and as a child he explains Russia. Since I have seen him wandering I have understood why he was always counted as a “soul” in the censuses and tax-collections. I have remembered the story of the old babushka who walked from the Ural Mountains alone on a pilgrimage to the great lavra at Kiev and was never lonely, she said, because she was with her soul. Packed in a train with peasants on both sides, peasants on the hard bench opposite, peasants hanging over me and with all the goods and chattels and winter food supply of peasants around my feet, I have been as unreflected in those remote child eyes as the level fields or the dark forests we passed through.

At every station some beggar pushed his way in at the door and chanted in an iambic mumble the story of his sorrows. He forced himself through the conglomerate mass, now a legless man shuffling around the bales underfoot, now a blind singer shoved on his stumbling

way, again a dwarf ducking between the legs of the crowd. Only the penniless among my brooding neighbors ever resisted these appeals. For each unfortunate they brought out kopeks from odd hiding places, these peasants who only a few years before the Revolution had been so used to barter in kind that they knew no other currency. Yet they refused to exchange grain for goods when Lenin commanded. Villagers unaccustomed to money forced its use upon Communists determined to abolish money. The same villagers rose to wrestle with their old lords at the word of the Bolsheviks and then opposed the insuperable force of passive resistance to every effort of the new lords to communize the land.

Traveling with peasants one sees why in Russian historic plays the event is always decided by some power outside the actors — the elemental power of a people moving by instinct. The mood of the Russian medieval sagas, still sung in the north, seems almost a contemporary mood. In mystic imagery so like the epics of the Celtic bards, the songs of the Russian bogatyrs are as much larger and bolder in their sweep as the harp of Tara is dwarfed by that harp of Stavr that had "one string strung from Kiev and one from Tsargrad and the third from far Jerusalem." Was it not upon the ancient Scythians, ancestors of the Slavs, that a golden plough and axe fell down from heaven? And was it not Mikula, the Villager's Son, who hurled back into the heavens the plough the Russian peasant points out to-day when Orion is clear in the low sky of the steppe? With the plough, in the old legends, went the imperial power. It is the Villager's Son who is most often the hero

of the epics. His wallet is too heavy for the strongest giant to lift because "the whole weight of the earth lieth therein."

And still, I suspect, the whole weight of power in this empire rests in the peasant. To understand the slow unwieldy movements of to-day, to guess at the struggles of to-morrow, it is necessary first to feel the strength of the earth in Russia. Just because the peasant has been a serf and is now in the main illiterate and unaware of the outer world, all the more immeasurable by known gauges are his vitality, his high-powered cunning, the invincible force of his instinct. Those who argue that only upon an inert and subjugated population could a handful of Bolsheviks have foisted an untried theory ignore the susceptibility of the Russian peasant to large and strange ideas and his ripeness for revolution. They forget that the Bolshevik only lets the mujik keep the land he first took for himself, and are blind to the most suggestive phenomenon of the past decade, which is that the peasant who made communism possible has also made it impossible.

When the tale is told of the part taken by peasants in the Revolution, it will be seen that Karl Marx and his theories counted less in the upheaval than the unleashed villagers worked up to strike for land. The ruins of country houses record how ruthlessly the mujiks in many districts anticipated the pogroms of the Red Guard against the former landlords. The first I saw was near the town of Klin, not far from the rambling red wooden house, vaguely and widely American, where Tchaikovsky lived and died. It is pleasant country, green that

afternoon under the streaked thin shade of birches, and bearing traces of the large but simple state in which the *barins* of yesterday were so rudely disturbed. A couple of villagers strolling in an over-grown park stopped to look at the stone foundation of the house that once rose among the hacked trees. They examined with grave head-shaking a broken statue buried in the weedy grass. I remarked upon their expression; it was so mild and gentle, so sorrowful over the havoc they witnessed. My host smiled. "They probably helped to burn that house," he said. "All over Russia peaceable peasants like these cheerfully murdered their landlords. Nevertheless they are quite as meek and mournful as they look. They cannot understand in their normal moods the outbreaks of ferocity they are capable of in times of mass excitement. They are the most compassionate and patient people in the world, and none can be so easily lashed into fury. Without this mild mujik the Revolution would have fizzled out in Petersburg."

In Moscow the peasant is resented as earth-bound or heaven-bound; both bounds to the Bolshevik are alike obstructive. In the country Moscow is not so much mad — no theorist is ever mad to the Russian — as greedy, squeezing the farms for the town proletariat. The villages have a sullen conviction that they are fated to be exploited by their rulers, yesterday for the landlords and to-day for the factories.

The universal war between *urbs* and *rus*, older than Rome, profounder than the difference between capitalism and communism, which here turns out to be merely the difference between state trusts and private trusts, rages far more angrily in proletarian Russia than in other

commonwealths. The Communist is never a countryman; he is embittered because the one field in the world in which there was a chance for a practical demonstration of communism is not a factory, like England or Germany, but a wide wheat field occupied by overpowering millions of tenacious and covetous peasants. He fights every step of the way against surrender to his eternal enemy. All the quick changes in the tune and tempo of the proletarian march, all the clashes and discordances in the score, are dictated by the peasant. He is responsible for the sudden veers from Left to Right and from Right to Left. He has split wide open the tight ranks of the strongest party organization in existence.

As long ago as 1905, after the abortive revolution of that year, Trotsky declared that it was impossible to found a socialist state on a peasant population; his plan of campaign was to use Russia as a base of operations for fighting capitalism in more industrialized countries. He had so little hope of the success of communism in the villages that long after the triumphant coup of 1917 he argued that only by converting the whole world could Russia be forced into line. This was the theory of "permanent revolution"; it proposed at the same time to prevent the emergence of a new bourgeoisie by constantly taxing down to the common level the peasant who got ahead. The realistic Lenin disagreed. Having surrendered to the peasant in the New Economic Policy, he thereafter allowed considerable leeway to rural initiative and acquisitiveness. Until very recently the same program was pursued by Stalin, the secretary general of the Communist Party, who more



than any other man succeeded to the power of Lenin when that power passed from the dead leader back to the Party itself. Stalin never sees a peasant, he seldom sees anybody; he holds no office in the government and speaks Russian with a Georgian accent difficult for old Russians to understand. Yet the Soviet Union is ruled from his big, many-windowed office in the Party headquarters, and it is due to him that in the past two or three years the peasants have breathed and stretched under communism. He agrees that industrial development is essential to the existence of the communistic system, but he was as unbending as the steel for which he named himself in opposing Trotsky's imperious demand that the fat farm be milked to nourish industry.

After the victory over Trotsky, however, and the banishment to Central Asia of the impenitent and incurable rebel who had been ineffectually retired to the Caucasus in 1925, Stalin immediately adopted the program of the Opposition. Evidently the steeliness was only against indiscipline, or — which is more likely — the Party objected to nothing in Trotsky's ideas except his expression of them. At any rate, there began a campaign against the kulaks and the "middle" peasants significantly reminiscent of the roughest years of militant communism. The village industries have been shut down, taxes have been remitted for new categories of poor peasants and heavily increased for the more prosperous villagers. More than that, in order to stamp out private trade in grain at a price above that fixed by the government and prevent the diversion of corn from the state distilleries to the manufacture of bootleg vodka, the forcible collection of grain was resumed at the end of

1927. In the summer of 1928 some restrictions were removed, but a grain dictator was appointed to deal with the unsatisfactory crop situation.

Observers on the ground cannot interpret these reversals of policy, this new effort to communize the peasant. They ask whether capitalism has grown in the rural districts to threatening proportions, whether the dictatorship is so firmly established that it is ready to move forward after the retreat which Lenin insisted was only temporary, or whether Stalin is merely proving his orthodoxy and the impracticability of Trotsky's demands. The peasant will eventually give the answer. In Russia his is always the last word. He votes when he plants his wheat.

Of course the weight of numbers is always on the side of campaigns against the kulaks. The poor peasants are more numerous than the rich. And the "rich" are so only by the law of relativity. In the course of some inquiries in regard to Soviet taxation, I was perplexed by the apparent inconsistencies in the sliding scale of peasant taxes. My perplexity was shared by the very obliging expert who was endeavoring to enlighten me. Soviet officials are always ready to help and inform the foreign visitor, and this one spread all the records before me and did his best to explain why a family of five pays a lower income tax than a family of two on the lowest taxable income — then, by the way, 150 rubles — but a higher tax than the smaller family when the income of both rises to 1,000 rubles. He had never noticed that before; he pondered over the figures in vain. Finally he looked up brightly and assured me with a relieved smile that it was a purely academic question anyway. "It is impos-

sible," he said, "for a family of any size to earn a thousand rubles a year from land alone in the Moscow district."

The kulaks were among the first victims of the Revolution. They were dispersed with the landlords and their holdings divided in the general distribution. But another set of kulaks has grown up in the villages as inevitably as thrift, industry or shrewdness are unevenly apportioned in a non-equalitarian universe. While in the factory the piece-worker can be and is encouraged and rewarded, piece-workers on the farm must be penalized; they so soon become an owning and therefore a dangerous class. One of the sharpest dilemmas of the Soviet system is to keep up agricultural production and at the same time keep down the best producers. The kulak produced the major part of the grain which made the old Russia the largest wheat exporter in the world. Now the rich peasants grow fewer and the poor peasants consume more and more of their own product, with the result that the exportable wheat amounts to less than one-twentieth of the pre-war total and white bread disappears in the cities. This situation is the more serious because the harvest represents not only the peasant vote but the government currency abroad. Industrial development depends upon machinery bought with wheat. The policies of the Communist Party in power are subsidized by wheat. Russia as such means no more to the communist than China or the Pacific Islands, so that you can go from one end of the country to the other and never hear the name of Russia mentioned; but it is nevertheless a great empire, next to Great Britain the greatest in the world, and so obviously the only empire

communism has or is soon likely to acquire that even to the Third International nothing is more important than the support of the Russian peasant.

Lenin's solution for the agricultural problem was the collective farm, the cultivation in common, on the factory system, of great areas of land. That admirable scheme for industrializing the farmers was as effectively blocked by rural opposition as were the attempts at communal ownership and state control of farm produce. Model collective farms have been established on the best estates in each district with the object of demonstrating the benefits of large-scale, scientific farming, but so far the models have not been successful enough to be impressive. The peasants living near only grumble because the fields devoted to their instruction are not added to their individual holdings. The communal farms have been superseded by artels and a new type of strictly money-making co-operative farm. The organization is that of a stock company in which the members are shareholders working one large plot of land; animals and machinery are bought in common, wages are paid and dividends are declared. Rural buying and selling co-operatives had reached a flourishing state in Russia before the war. The Communists now realize their mistake in breaking up the old co-operatives and are in every way encouraging their revival. Stalin urges the organization of more co-operative and collective farms to take the place of large estates in restoring production to the pre-revolutionary level. The new co-operatives raise most of the exportable grain; they represent individual attempts to unite small, unprofitable holdings and overcome the congestion of the agricultural areas.

Two things constantly surprise the observer in rural Russia. The first, and this is a phenomenon of the whole socialistic experiment, is that when goods that make a small class outrageously rich are divided up among the multitude, nobody seems to be much better off than he was before. Land is the most important instance of that disturbing truth. The landlords swept out of the way by the Bolshevik revolution owned only one-fourth of the land. From the peasant point of view the freeing of the serfs by the Tsar Alexander in 1861 and the clumsy attempt of Stolypin to abolish the medieval Mir system by the agrarian reforms of 1906 were more revolutionary than the land seizures of 1917. When the great holdings that enriched the nobles were divided among a hundred million people they added only one-third more at the most, less in many cases, to each small farm. The peasant complains bitterly that he has not yet enough land, and as all available ground is now rigidly partitioned, he wants to know how he can get more or how the dessiatines apportioned to him are going to be stretched to give holdings to his children. It should be explained that the family, oddly enough, is the agricultural unit in Communist Russia. Ownership is nominally vested in the state, but the land "belongs" to the peasant family as long as any member works it, and it descends to the family. There is absolute ownership in buildings, live stock and equipment. If, by renting from other peasants, or cultivating neglected land, or engaging in some profitable home industry, a peasant is able to employ farm labor, he is a nepman, and is accordingly taxed, disfranchised and otherwise discriminated against.



That is the second surprise to the beholder of these immense, solitary, inhuman landscapes. The farming area actually is over-populated. As at present worked, it cannot support the peasant population, and all schemes for increasing it, such as opening up the fertile and almost virgin continent of Siberia, clearing for agriculture the most extensive forest lands on earth, or supplying modern machinery and education to intensify production on the wide plains now so inefficiently cultivated, involve capital investments of staggering magnitude.

In Moscow one day I watched a line of peasants waiting to talk to the consulting agronome in the Peasant House. Such houses are maintained in all the cities as a headquarters for the villagers when they come to town. Like the "patronage" of villages by various factory groups, they are part of a great campaign to draw the peasant into the Soviet system and forge links between the town proletariat and the country. The Peasant House in Moscow occupies the quarters of what was once an enormous restaurant. I remember the "banquet hall deserted" through which we stumbled in going from one part of the institution to another. It was dark and empty and mouldy, and a gilt curlycue from some despondent decoration fell from the ceiling. As I passed the stage with its shreds of dusty drapery, I wondered if the boosters of Moscow had ever gathered there to hear convention talks on the sure methods of success! Beyond were little private dining rooms opening on a bedraggled garden; in place of the banqueters were models of modern ploughs and cream separators. Only a few country people were in the Peasant House and they were all gathered about the new farm implements. When I

asked the agronome what the peasant most frequently consulted him about, he answered that it was always the same thing. "Machinery! Machinery!" he said. "They all want to know how and where they can find money to buy tractors." Three hundred tractors were then co-operatively owned in the Moscow gubernia. Henry Ford has since stated that he sold thirty thousand to Russia last year. He would be interested if he could hear the Commissar of Agriculture proclaiming the tractor as the instrument of highest importance in developing collectivism. The American often blinks as he listens to the communists describing the future. Can it be that we are enjoying communism without knowing it?

The peasant complains. The few villages I was able to visit all rumbled and growled with complaint. They narrowed their eyes at the approach of strangers, like suspicious mastiffs stretched lazily on door-steps, but they grew cheerful and friendly when they barked. I do not know whence comes the dark legend of the Russian villages. In the summer, at least, they seemed to me more genial and certainly more natural than the towns. In the country one loses the sense of urban strain and caution — the grumbling is loud and hearty!

I hesitate to make generalizations about a population I saw so little and talked to only through interpreters, especially when my impressions contradict those of others, but I can only say that I have never met peasants who looked and sounded so little servile as the Russians. They are big, to begin with; they walk to their work across the fields with none of the shambling decrepitude I have beheld on so many Balkan roads; they

have a touch of ready impudence when they talk; they are somehow dignified and set apart by their look of vague brooding, as of a people always lost in thought.

The streets in the hamlets I saw were only ruts in a field. The houses were set askew and at uneven intervals. Low walls of rough logs were incongruously adorned with little windows edged with wooden scrollwork like a home-cut valentine. Both doors and windows seemed to have been stuck in as an after-thought, and if one peered inside one was sure they were used mostly for decoration. The shops, if any, were unpainted wooden stalls, or baskets filled with various kinds of produce. We spent one week-end as guests of an American writer and his wife in a kulak house in a sunny and superior village on the banks of the Moscow River. The young people swam in the stream on Sunday morning, and the old people went to church. The members of the village Soviet boiled the day's catch of fish in a big black pot on the river bank, and engaged in increasingly lively political discussion as they passed around the vodka bottle. The fishermen were an *artel*, they said, but the profits of the corporation that day did not go to swell the income tax. Like the waiters of the *artel* running the restaurant we frequented in Leningrad, they complained that every kopek of profit was so promptly collected by the government that all they got out of their business was a chance to eat — if they ate quickly!

The pattern of life is large, ragged and primitive, but I cannot see how any one observing such villages can explain Russia as a case of slave psychology. Lethargic the peasants may be, but they are astonishingly uncowed. They stand up for themselves freely and vigor-

ously. They beat the tax collectors and challenge the judges in the People's Court. The pleasantest sight I saw in Russia was a peasant woman pulling out of line an officer of the dreaded G. P. U. who had gone ahead of his turn in a ticket queue. Even the poorest villages take a kind of defiant pride in keeping their churches open. It would be too much to say that the constant propaganda against religion has not influenced the young of the country-side. While adult Communists are rare in the villages — the average is one to a community, and he is usually planted — about fifteen per cent of the youth are Young Communists ( Comsomols ) and Pioneers. Reinforced by the conscripts of the Red Army who come back from their term of military service politically as well as physically drilled, these youths often overpower their elders and control the local Soviet. There is an epidemic of hooliganism. Rampant youth literally paints the village red. But religion is old and deep-rooted and the assaults outrage the same brooding mass that rose up ten years ago and killed the landlords. Instead of a perfunctory duty church attendance in many places has become an exciting demonstration of protest.

The peasant complains. But observe that his grievance against the revolutionary government is not because it has gone too far, but because it has not gone far enough. He has heard so much about the privileges and rights of the proletariat that he becomes more and more vocal in demanding his share of those benefits. He does not grumble at changes. With increasing vehemence he wants to know why there are not more changes. He demands " the new things " he has been promised. No native in the world is more easily impressed by propaganda

than this vague, unstable, terribly open-minded rustic. He is subject to epidemics of ideas and emotions; by the millions he has followed crazed ecstasies announcing novel formulas of penance and redemption. Now he anticipates the traveler's query in the unchanged village. Where, he demands, where is this new Russia for which we drove out the oppressors? He has never known any better shelters than the dark hovels he now occupies, but he protests loudly that the government has done nothing about village housing. He is eighty per cent illiterate, and he makes the welkin ring inquiring where are the schools for all he was promised by the tenth anniversary. His land has been unfairly divided, his taxes are not only oppressive but they are unstandardized and changeable.

I could go on for pages enumerating his complaints. At mention of the village clubs, the village libraries, the new radio, the debates in the village Soviet, the sheaves of posters, instruction charts and agricultural graphs of all kinds I had seen bundled up in Moscow and sent to all the villages, the peasant shrugs; he remarks that if the government were as good at anything else as it is at political education, he would not still be eating bread and cucumbers. He grumbles that such schools as he gets are used primarily to teach communism, and that whereas there used to be one Tsar in the country, and one could occasionally forget him, there is now a Tsar for every village, in the person of the local Communist, and he meddles in everything.

Listen to this peasant goading the Communist and you cannot doubt that the Revolution has affected the



peasants as profoundly as the peasants have modified the Revolution. The villages look so exactly as they must always have looked, poor and prone and slumped in the aboriginal communism, that one hears them with a shock. They are almost as drunk with ideas as with vodka, and both potions are powerful in Soviet Russia: of these government commodities there is never any sobering shortage. "If the peasant asks for ikons or booze — these things we will not make for him," declared Lenin. "For that is definitely retreat; that is definitely degeneration that bends him backward. Concessions of this sort we will not make." But the state spirits monopoly yields \$375,000,000 a year, therefore the anti-alcohol crusade of Lenin's successors is primarily directed against the competition of the mujik who makes moonshine vodka out of his corn rather than sell it for export at government prices.

Drunk or sober, however, the mujik stirs. He is agitated by the persistent and skilful propaganda of experts whose most highly developed science is the psychology of the mass mind. Considering that no counter ideas of any other kind have reached him for ten years, and that he has always been incredibly cut off from the world, the wonder is that he is not more perfectly converted than he is. The Kremlin has not been able to develop in the fields the same thrill of proletarian pride that galvanizes the workers in the factories. Among so many unorganized millions, only an infinitesimal proportion can be made to share the gusto of the town laborer in the sense of power. They can, however, be taught to demand things they have never dreamed of demanding. The government is already embarrassed to supply that

demand. One of the reasons for the shortage of goods in the towns is that they have been diverted to the country to appease the peasant hunger for manufactured articles and to allay his discontent with the present state of "the scissors" — the name always used in Russia for the wide gap between the low price the farmer gets for his grain and the high price he pays for other goods. It is significant that whereas in the city the workers speak of the government as "we," in the country, as in the old days, it is still referred to as "they." The bureaucrats of this regime are no more popular than the hated "tchinovniks" of the past. All representatives of government are still anathema, a tax-gathering, alien, spying crew, to be avoided or outwitted whenever possible, and always to be distrusted.

Only one of the palaces of the Tsars has been turned over to the workers, and that has been set apart as a rest house for peasants. At Livadia, on the vine-covered shores of the Black Sea, you see tired mujiks from the farthest fields stretched in the Tsar's arm-chairs, eating in the imperial dining room and sunning themselves on marble terraces hung between cypresses and a blue bay. It is a dramatic sight, and it is intended to be dramatic. It is also, I think, symbolic. Because it is the peasant who is tsar of the destinies of Russia; even the passerby can see how much more masterful is this than other soils. For decades the old rulers feared and resisted the growth of proletarianism in the villages. During his long hibernation in the isbas of the steppe, his endless debates in the village council, the peasant mulls over his grievances. He acts only after generations of such nebulous and troubled thinking, but when he does his movement

is as irresistible as the earth shaking. It is foolish to count upon his stupidity or his conservatism. He is anything but stupid and he is too young to be conservative.

To one observer, at any rate, the recent growth of the new co-operative farm, replacing alike the old communism of the Mir and the new communism of the Sovhos or Soviet farm, the religious passion for tractors and all machinery, the rumble of complaint and demand and shrewd questioning, the abnormal excitement of the scoffing village youth, set certainly and irrevocably on new paths, are more impressive and prophetic of the future than anything going on in the towns. The peasant is like a marcher out of hearing of the band. Nevertheless, he marches to its far-away drum beats. I am not sure that he is not marching faster than anybody in the parade.

ON THE VOLGA

THE VOLGA was very peaceful when we embarked that August evening, too peaceful, someone said, complaining that the traffic was not what it used to be. The big oil-burning steamer slid slowly and without vibration through the smooth upper reaches of the river. The broad brown stream looked even broader than it was because it had no banks. Between dark walls of pine trees and the tarnished silver of the water the annual floods had cleared immense grassy margins flowing level and green beside the tawny current. The sky was a typical Russian sky, wider than other skies and almost transparent, stained now the palest amber by a sunset that lingered on a remote horizon like a lamp in a window

left open in the dark. Sometimes oddly amphibian flocks of sheep and goats browsed in the shallows, or the pine walls opened and a low white church with silver cupolas gleamed in a dusky village. Once or twice a pillared manor house appeared on a low rise with a faint suggestion of the Potomac at Mount Vernon. Flat-bottomed row boats waited to cross the road while we drifted by. Occasionally we threw down a canvas bundle sewed up tight for transport, as all packages must be; into one waiting skiff, near a town landing, we tossed six chairs one by one.

It was like sailing through a field. The Volga seems a strip of the earth itself relaxed and fluent. Even the boat, if one could forget the few stragglers on the clean and roomy upper deck, was like a village, or like Russia, moving. Packed on the lower decks fore and aft were Tartars and Turkomans, Armenians, Caucasians and Greeks, the profiles of Asia dark and sharp among the homely unoccupied faces of the Slavs. All the faces looked cheerful, as unfretted by the herded discomfort as Russians always can be in the joy of talk and gregarious movement. While the tea was brewed and the black bread shared, a blind Ukrainian twanged on a primitive lyre an accompaniment to a droning chant on a few notes. A jolly armless man sat on a pile of flour sacks and was helped from a dozen samovars. There was no music on our deck, but down below, as the night deepened, they all began to sing. The choruses were low at first and then they swelled and gathered volume. The third class intoned hymns. "Gospodi! Gospodi, pomiloui!" they chanted in sonorous crescendos that can be heard only where choirs are born not made, and the richest bass



and clearest treble in the world fall into chords as natural as the rhythms of the river. Almost as solemnly the fourth class struck up the brave and endless ballads most often heard in the villages, the songs of the Young Kazak and of the heroic adventures of the patriot bandit, Stenka Razin.

Only the day before in Moscow a Communist friend had told me that I should never hear now on the Volga the old Boat Song. As a matter of fact we heard it only once, at Kineshma, where a dozen boatmen on the shore, bending and straightening with the swing of the chorus, sang as they pulled up barrels strung on a rope. But I said I had had too much of it a few months before during a snow-bound week in the Montenegrin mountains, when a group of homesick Russians sang all night long around the stove in the dining room of a hotel in Cetinje. "One of the shreds of Wrangel's army," the Communist shrugged contemptuously. "Well, on the Volga now they are singing a different tune." So they were — old hymns and ballads of the Russian Robin Hood. As I listened over the deck rail the world of Moscow was very far away. It was our first trip into the country, and we seemed already to have moved beyond the orbit of the Revolution. I felt that nothing could ever have broken this peace, or shaken this ancient order. Here were folk songs, folk ways, contrasts between classes more marked than can be found anywhere else in the modern world.

And then we came to Yaroslavl, the historic and once powerful city that looks very splendid still on its plateau above the river and from afar off makes a proud

flourish of white walls and tall towers and bubbling, iridescent domes. The landing, like all the docks on that constantly over-flowing stream, is as flimsy and casual as if it led to a lumber camp. What it does lead to is ruin.

Until I climbed the slope to Yaroslavl I had not realized the desperateness of the civil war in Russia. There it is for any one to see, a town devastated by battle as shattering as the sieges that reduced Louvain and Arras. Its walls are spongy with shell holes; there are gashes in its towers and rents and punctures in its domes. Life goes on among the ruins; streets are full of pedlars and in the market are gay booths strung with little wooden toys. They make playthings; nothing is more characteristic of the youth of this land than the unending inventiveness with which, whatever happens, it keeps on whittling toys. But that renders only more desolate the drunken belfries and the piles of wreckage left where it fell. In a big hole in the cobbled pavement of the square in front of the mutilated cathedral, a group of young men and boys gleefully stirred a bonfire to melt a huge bronze bell. From the open door of the church issued a quaver of old voices as cracked as the ruined frescoes on the walls. It was Defense Week, wherever we went it was Defense Week, and a platoon of men and women marched and counter-marched on the other side of the square. Peace? We might have been in a war zone between bombardments!

It is like that in Russia. At night you are sunk in a past so undisturbed that you doubt the reality of the Revolution and the next morning you strike some toppled stronghold and decide that no overturn has ever been more complete. We knew there had been hard

fighting on the Volga, and the worst famine, but no one had ever thought to mention Yaroslavl as a devastated town.

They are spoken of now as "militant," those unreported years from 1917 to 1921, during which the Red Army may be said to have conquered Russia and surrendered to the Russians. Nobody will ever know precisely what happened in that chaotic, planless struggle when the peasants were sometimes with the Social Revolutionaries and sometimes with the Bolsheviks (there were no Communists then), when Red armies and White armies, Cadets, Poles and Czechs all fought in a dozen different theatres their almost isolated wars. But in Yaroslavl you see that there was an internal contest deadlier than the outside world suspected; too vividly you can imagine what that "militancy" meant.

At Nizhni-Novgorod the famous Fair had opened but it was not yet, we were told, in full swing. Later visitors reported that it never got into full swing. The glory has departed from the one great bazar in the world where the East and the West met every year to trade. More than half the warehouses were closed and so many of the booths were empty that one could compare, too handily, the shrunken present with the opulent past. Nizhni is unique in that it is not an exposition or a sample fair but a real market, a vast town of warehouses and booths and arcades stretching along the Volga banks, and flooded as regularly every spring as it is opened every August. Only enough remained to suggest the colossal emporium it must have been in its heyday, before modern merchandising no less than the Soviet restrictions on

private trade took all the zest out of the fine Oriental game of buying and selling. There were furs from Siberia, dried fruits from Persia and Afghanistan, carpets and silks from the Caucasus, the gossamer shawls of Orenburg, skins from the Kirghiz and the Mongol steppes. The goods were not particularly tempting, but the names solicited the imagination. I confess that I liked the sound of the silks of Samarkand better than the silks. Siberian sables I had seen cheaper in New York. The only section of the Fair up to the old tradition was the labyrinth of fragrant lanes wherein currants and raisins and strange spices were piled up like hills, so high that they dwarfed the swarthy salesmen standing by.

One walked between these pale brown hummocks straight to the slopes of Central Asia, to those vague buffer lands between Russia and India which some prophets mark out as the field for the final wrestle between the Lion and the Bear. Most of the traders left at Nizhni were from Persia and Afghanistan. No wonder the traveling Ameer when he came to Moscow recognized among all the Soviet chiefs only Malisheff, tsar of the Nizhni Fair. Malisheff is a giant from a fairy tale, a typically Russian giant. The earth shakes when he laughs, and he has a beard to swear by. As he towers among the little men from the Kremlin even a ruler who was not a merchant in his bazar would pick out Malisheff as King of the Communists.

The four in our party were the only Western visitors in Nizhni that day. We picked up a boy who offered himself as a guide, a wistful boy who had been in America and spoke a little English. But he soon disowned us. We took a tram across the long and shaky wooden

bridge, removed and re-erected every year, that connects the Fair with the town proper. We wished to get off at a stop on the opposite bank near our hotel, but though we signalled in good time, severally and all together, the car did not stop. It began to climb towards the Kremlin, which crowns the wide hill whence Nizhni-Novgorod looks across at the Fair and up and down her two rivers, the Volga and the Oka. The climb is long and steep, without a stop between the bottom and the top, and we protested against being carried up. We protested even more when the conductor insisted on collecting an extra fare for taking us beyond our destination. Like all Russian conductors, this one was a woman. They come in standard sets, hard and unhuman as the amazons of the Paris Commune. If she alone had glowered at us we should not have been surprised, but to our bewilderment the passengers glowered, too. In a moment the crowded car literally growled. It turned on us angrily, with I don't know what epithets and threats, and when finally we reached the top of the incline and started to walk back down the rough cobblestones we were followed by jeers. "Those English!" we heard some one mutter. Our guide deserted during the demonstration; when he furtively rejoined us half way down the hill he explained that he had been obliged to swear that he did not know us and had never seen us before. "I am sorry," he said, "but you go and I have to stay."

In Nizhni also, it was Defense Week. The civilian population was being drilled to fight the foreign enemy, particularly, as we saw, the hated English. We watched the awkward squads manoeuvring in the big untidy parade ground by the Kremlin wall, near a massive



granite base topped by a toy cannon in place of a Tsar on horseback. Nizhni-Novgorod is an impressive town, nobly placed and planned; an odd lot of new museums occupied the shabby white mansions on the sweeping boulevard along the Volga. But when I think of it I see instead of shabby squares and flooding rivers the line of Persians by the hills of currants brought over the mountains from the heart of Asia and the wall of threatening faces turned upon us because we were supposed to represent England. There you have all the obscure elements of wars. And I wonder about the well-dressed woman who joined us as we walked along the river road. She asked eagerly if we had come from Moscow. Her husband had been an official there; he had been sent away. She talked volubly for a few minutes and then abruptly, in the middle of a sentence, she turned and ran! A little farther along, as I peered into an abandoned church, a girl beckoned. She opened a door upon a barn-like room piled almost to the ceiling with torn and mouldering church records, records by the thousand of baptisms, marriages and deaths. She said nothing, she simply opened the door.

By such glimpses does the traveler guess at Russia. In a lazy week upon the Volga he sees more than he sees in ten weeks spent among the information bureaus and planning boards of Moscow. For the Volga is more than a river; it is the Russian Main Street. Events have reversed the position of the Nevsky Prospekt and the Tverskaya, but the chief thoroughfare of the central steppe, the highway for the farms and the forests, remains today what it was yesterday

The Volga is the alimentary canal of the empire; when its wharves are not heavy with grain the country starves, as it starved in 1920-21. It is the main delivery route for half the population; the villages empty their produce upon that long brown road, and in exchange for timber and corn, flax and hides, receive back horses and ploughs, oil and cotton blouses. They gossip and barter and work along its banks, they use it for ferry and tramway. It is the biggest river in Europe, but so intimate a part of his daily life that to the peasant it is always his "Little Mother Volga."

From its source in the immeasurable forests of the north the Volga cuts through the heart of the oldest Russia. It sweeps past the blond Slav towns, Rybinsk, Yaroslavl, Kiñeshma, Kostroma, Nizhni-Novgorod. Their cupolas rise out of ramparts and green trees like fantastic gardens of golden pineapples and silver turnips and bright blue mushrooms on thick white stems. Never, it is true, are these fairylands quite what they seem from the river. The glamour fades on closer view into the familiar blur of dilapidation. Perhaps it was always so. In other Slav towns, in Poland and in Yugoslavia, I have noticed quite new buildings deteriorating under the same neglect. The Soviet guide book calls attention here and there to "beautiful factories," but so far I fear it toots in vain. So long as there remain along the upper Volga more churches and monasteries than there are in Italy, the best intentions cannot make the landscape look industrial. The sky is crystal; who was it first thought to call the Russian sky "the color of Truth"?

On the Volga you perceive how European old Rus-

sia really is. It is not as the rest of Europe, — there is something in the Slavophil idea of the Slavs as a race apart, — but neither is it Asia. It is not until you reach Kazan, capital of the Tartars, camp of the Golden Horde, that the East meets you, thinly clothed in Russian blouses. Thence the banks rise and the river widens; muddy and hot and swollen it bends toward Samara and those curious racial compounds, like islands in a sea, the German and Bulgar Volga Republics. After Saratov the towns grow dirtier, the people more hybrid; by the time it empties at reeking Astrakhan into the steaming, sunken bowl of the Caspian, the Volga is definitely an Oriental river.

The people flow like the stream. They crowd every landing, all the types and breeds of all the Russias, a racial and social chaos that makes you think dubiously of the neat diagrams of Moscow. You get an impression of great physical vitality nourished on large and unending meals of black bread, tea and cucumbers. The villagers come down to watch the boat unload and the passenger, if he is a foreigner, gets out and wanders through the streets; the natives seldom move from the decks. All the towns were alike casual and unkempt. The people, though poorly dressed and haphazardly housed, looked stalwart and cheerful. Food in the straggling market places was not cheap but it was good and abundant. We bought fruit and vegetables, cheese and Caucasian wine; in the farthest towns we strolled and bargained and poked into odd corners as unremarked as if strangers from other lands were not as rare as celestial visitations. As in the cities, everything is sold in the streets — bedsteads, leather boots, pots and pans, books. The books

were sad and tattered, the residue of the sacked library of some unhappy *barin*, perhaps such a one as the erect old man I met in a monastery garden in Moscow, who grieved for his orphaned books as others wept over lost houses or dead sons. Three or four times among the old books we came across yellowed volumes of Fenimore Cooper; that was interesting because I cannot think of any American author more at home in the wide, frontier-like back country of Russia.

After the experience in the tram at Nizhni-Novgorod we never met hostility again except from two villagers who accused us of the "murder" of Sacco and Vanzetti, then filling the front pages of the remotest provincial papers. The villagers were rather the worse for vodka and were fixed in the idea that the executed men were Russian Communists. When they learned that they were Italians their anger cooled; they did not care what happened to "Mussolini's people."

In general the Volga ports ignored us. All the interest in the encounter seemed to be on our side. Yet they could not have been as incurious as they seemed, because crowds camped for hours at the boat landings and gazed in a kind of trance at the stir of life on the docks. Sometimes they made a picnic of it and sipped their tea on the waterside almost under the heels of the freight handlers striding back and forth with sacks of grain and kegs of oil. The boatmen were young men full of snap and laughter; they never minded having to knock somebody out of the way and nobody ever minded being knocked. The whole population appeared as free and relaxed as we felt ourselves to be. The police were nowhere in evidence. We went where we liked as unques-

tioned as we were disregarded. The Russian-speaking member of our party on a later trip had a bag of clothes stolen from his stateroom while the steamer docked at Nizhni-Novgorod. He reported the theft to the local officer of the Gay-Pay-Oo, and most of the lost articles were promptly recovered from a gang of the homeless boys who roam the roads "fishing" with long sticks through the windows of passing boats and trains.

On this excursion, however, we lost nothing — unless it was the Bolsheviks! On the Volga the new social processes are slowed down. It is Main Street, a strange, unsettled hodgepodge of a Main Street, the most various, fluid and panoramic of them all, but as impervious to rapid change as if there were not a Communist in the world. The river towns we saw have in the past ten years suffered war and pestilence, famine, drought and flood. They have been so prostrate and are now so tired that one marvels less at their slackness and lethargy than at the inexhaustible source of their adolescent strength.

The Volga reminds me of a Bear wandering in Babel. It starts out white and thin and young in the north, squinting at the snow. It ends up in the south, after how many changes and vicissitudes, brown and fat and still young, blinking at the sun. Everywhere it is awkward, careless, and never quite at home. But whatever its color and its climate it is always the same Bear and the Babel is always Russia.

The steamer, as I have said, was a world rigidly and sharply classified. There were four classes, and such huddled and comfortless steerage accommodations



as no longer exist anywhere else. But the human cargo was happy enough; it expected nothing better. Under the Communists at home there was none of the bitter rebellion the Communist abroad manifests against much less brutal discrimination. The only difference between classes on the Volga and classes in other countries is that here it is more difficult to tell which is which.

We decided that the few first- and second-class passengers were officials or nepmen. They treated themselves as lavishly as they could where there is not much lavishness. We observed with interest that one group of men in rough blouses, looking no different from the passengers eating black bread on the lower deck, had double portions of caviar with their breakfast. And caviar, while plentiful and cheap in the shops, is in the restaurants of Russia almost as dear as it is in New York, and on the boat was so expensive that the Americans thriftily divided one portion between two. The food was excellent, as Russian food almost invariably is, and served in quantities which may account for the huge height of those ruddy giants one meets along the way. When we tired of the thick "tschee," or cabbage soup, and the pork chops, we made salads out of the tomatoes and crisp greens we bought in the village markets. If we ordered plates for the salad the charge was fifteen kopeks a plate, but if we ordered an egg we got the egg and the plate for ten kopeks.

That is a typical example of Russian figuring, usually a vague and always a painful process. In the background of every picture of the Volga I see a comrade with a torn scrap of paper fixed against the

wall and a stub of pencil held in air while he ruminated over our accounts. As on the trains and in many hotels, we paid extra for the bedding in our staterooms, which were roomy, clean and comfortable despite the inevitable stoppage in the water pipe. We paid extra for everything and all the extras made a fearful exercise in the higher mathematics for a worker whose training in economic determinism was better than his practice in arithmetic. He worried over it all day; whenever we passed through the narrow passage-way we saw him wrestling. Or should one say wrangling? At last one of us had to help him out. As the unruly figures fell into tidy sums, he regarded the American calculator not with admiration but with disdain. It was plain that he considered a capitalist system responsible for this easy juggling with capitalist symbols; for himself, he turned with relief from these sordid levels to the altitudes of pure economics.

There was this difference between the classes, that whereas on shore and down below we were unnoticed, on the upper deck we were constantly stared at. The women never lost interest in our shoes and stockings. One morning as I sat on a bench in the sun a sullen-looking young girl, wearing the sharply pointed shoes they affected in Europe before the war, kept walking up and down in front of me. Finally she sat down to continue her inspection more comfortably. An hour or more she spent in painstaking scrutiny of everything I had on. She felt the stuff and figured the pleats of my dress, studied critically a pair of woven sandals, took up my bag from the bench and smoothed the green leather. It was like a Russian customs examination,

leisurely and thorough. I had not the heart to move; she was so evidently and with such puzzled curiosity concentrating on a rare specimen from a world of which she had not the haziest picture. She was young enough, perhaps seventeen, never to have known even a Russia different from that of to-day. When she went to bring an older woman to see the strange exhibit, the other smiled apologetically. She murmured something about her daughter having spent all her life in the country.

The little pantomime was suggestive of the utter remoteness of the Russian Main Street from all other Main Streets. A whole generation has grown up with no knowledge of any other world. The Volga hears of Europe only as an enemy approaching, and of America only as a kind of mechanical Olympus where dwell the whirring gods of the machine. It happened that the clothes I wore that day had been bought in three Balkan towns, the dress in Rumania, the shoes in Greece and the bag in Jugoslavia. Exactly the same sort of clothes may be seen any day in New York, Serajevo or Bismarck, North Dakota. Russians are probably the only women on earth to-day who are not "in style," who neither take orders from Paris nor hear its voice, who hear no voice, indeed, except the voice of Moscow.

The implications of that unique and incredible isolation are profound and far-reaching. Flowing with the Volga and watching the soft, indefinite, plastic shore slip by, I wondered if a new standard of life can actually be created by shutting out all old standards. If it can, what will be the result if the largest single fraction of the earth's surface does begin all over again, so to speak,

and takes an absolutely independent line? There is an interesting speculation, but I cannot expect any one else to consider it as a serious possibility. For that it is necessary to lounge on a summer afternoon on the deck of a Volga steamer.

DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION

THE DAUGHTERS of the Revolution are a strong and formidable breed. They move across the Russian panorama like the Fates, with something inexorable in their slow plodding. Observers of old Russia often remarked that the women were of a firmer and more elastic fibre than the men. They play the heroic roles in Turgeniev and Tolstoy. From Vera Sasulich and Vera Figner to Breshkovskaya and Dora Kaplan, they have taken a virile and ruthless part in terrorism and conspiracy. Even among the *émigrés* of the old regime one is always struck by the superior courage and resourcefulness of the women. Whether they design clothes in Paris or make bortsch and piroshki in little Balkan restaurants,



they do what they have to do with an air of bitter gallantry; reduced to keeping alive in all the odd corners of the earth the primitive handicrafts being abandoned by the peasants in Russia, they manage to condescend to fate by meeting it carelessly, in its own mood of irony.

The female of the proletarian species looks as incapable of irony as of fear. She has never had a chance to rise to grace or stoop to folly. She is curiously neutral and curiously unbreakable as she moves: the switch-tender, square and weather-beaten, smoking cigarettes at her post on the car tracks; the ghoul-like guard in museums, aggressively passive; the overpoweringly informative guide; the indifferent, immobile clerk in the state shops; the absorbed delegate to the Soviet Congress; the old village matchmaker, toothless from chewing life raw; the girl Comsomol, solemn, muscular, self-assured; the red-haired amazon describing Schlusselfburg with cold passion in the Revolutionary Museum; the strong-armed fury pitching bales of cotton on the Volga; the matter-of-fact judge of the People's Court; the factory worker trudging from the Moscow station on Sunday nights, doubled under sacks of food bought in the country.

They are not romantic, these daughters of revolution. They are not even romantic about realism, like the more poetic and sentimental sex. They are strangely sexless. Many times I have tried to guess which were men in a group of comrades, all in linen blouses, seated behind a table. Women dressed roughly and alike, with no artificial aids to differentiation, are more like one another and more like men than any but a feminist would

believe. As I watched them, grim and invincible, moving slowly through the dust and debris of a wrecked world, I often thought that if the men relented or turned backward — and it is not impossible to imagine a snap in some of the strained and jumpy leaders — the women never would.

As a matter of fact the Russian Revolution is more revolutionary for women than for men. A system proposing to socialize all work hitherto defined as woman's and to oblige her to bear an equal part of the labor supposed to be man's, changes her life and her status far more than his and upsets a whole social and domestic structure founded on the proverbially separate spheres of the sexes. Lenin's fulminations against the kitchen sound like the manifesto of a woman's revolt. To the founder of the new order, housework was "utterly inconsequential," the domestic round was "petty, dreary and futile drudgery," the kitchen was as stultifying and stupefying a tradition as the altar. "No nation can be free," he said, "when half the population is enslaved in the kitchen."

In the communist conception of the state, citizens are economic entities, whether male or female is not of the slightest consequence, and their fundamental relationship is that of collaborators in productive work; they are units in mass production for the benefit of the mass. In such a system women work on the same terms as men. There is no question of their right to earn their own living; rather their obligation to work, and to work without regard to sex, is so stressed that the tendency is to push them into occupations, like stoking, mining and the building trades, considered beyond their strength in

other countries. When they are not pushed their need of work is so pressing that they themselves protest against protective laws on the ground that restrictions barring women from night work and certain forms of hard labor lead to unemployment and wage discrimination. There is nothing new for Russian women in that economic pressure. Of the farm laborers dragging back to the villages from the distant fields at night, fully half are and always have been women. The number of women in industry has increased by a third in the past few years, but it is not much greater than it used to be in proportion to the men; women now form about thirty per cent of the total of industrial workers, and about a fourth, or 2,569,200, of the membership of the trade unions. The largest proportion of Russian women are still employed in the old-fashioned, economically dependent private trade of housekeeping, and while these women are not disfranchised like other non-producers, their work being tolerated as necessary under present conditions to the productive labor of their husbands, cooking for one man or rearing one's own children is not considered either an economic or a satisfying occupation. Collective labor is predicated on collective living and the ideal is the relegation of all housekeeping and child care to public agencies.

But although her position is more revolutionized than that of men by the collectivist theory, the gathering force one feels in the woman of the proletariat is so far more potential than dynamic. Her participation in the administration of the labor unions is much smaller than she is entitled to by her numbers. Her industrial wage, theoretically and by law equal to that of man for equal

work, amounts in fact according to the latest published figures (March, 1927) to 64.4 per cent of his or 45.7 rubles a month on the average. The difference is due to the larger number of unskilled workers among women and to a tradition of discrimination even communist workmen are slow to shake off. The political rôle of women in the proletarian dictatorship is even more disproportionate. Considering that the Soviet State is the first to start from the beginning on a basis of absolute sex equality, and that women outnumber men in Russia by about 4,000,000, nothing in the whole experiment is more surprising than the meek and subordinate place of women in the government. They are members of the Communist Party in the proportion of about thirteen per cent, and a few sit on the Executive and Control Committees, but in the inner councils of the small group that actually rules, women have little or no influence.

There is no woman among the People's Commissars. In ten years, although ten per cent of the delegates to village, factory, state and All-Russian Soviets are women, only Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin, in charge of the Department of Political Education; Kameneva, wife of Kamenev and sister of Trotsky, director of the Society of Cultural Relations, and Kollontai, once Commissar of Social Welfare and twice ambassador, have held anything like first-class posts in the Soviet Union. The Department of Motherhood and Infancy is in charge of a very able woman physician, Lebedeva. Rosanova, formerly of the Soviet Embassy in London, energetically directs the foreign department of the Trade Union headquarters. A woman was acting as censor for all the foreign press dispatches while I was

in Moscow. The wife of Maxim Gorky conducts a bureau in aid of political prisoners. Many libraries, small museums, public monuments and institutions of various kinds are headed by women. But the visitor who expects to find the sexes sharing the seats of power and authority in a communist state will be disappointed. Women share more manual labor but succeed to no more of the really important offices than are meted out to them in the most conservative political systems. Feminism, of course, has no place in the Bolshevik philosophy. It implies a sex discrimination which has been abolished. It was only in the face of strong opposition from logical Communists that a special department of the Party, the Genotdel, was organized for separate work among women. The Genotdel is a concession to illogical reality in a country in which the women of the new ruling class were even less educated and ready for power than the men, and have responded more reluctantly to slogans that to most of them had no more meaning than phrases in a foreign language.

It is only when one turns to survey the social and moral changes, to probe into the effects of socialism applied to the home and the family, that one begins to feel the wheel revolving. Revolving is the right word; nowhere is it so easy to see all things moving in circles. The Soviet government has given full sweep to the reforms and emancipations in social, human and sex relations heretofore debated by agitators in other lands. Perhaps the greatest service it renders to the rest of the world is in opening a vast testing ground for the kind of experiments to which no other nation could or



would expose itself. For ten years Russia has been a crucible; the reactions of the population in general are still too clouded and contradictory to be reported with any degree of assurance, but the reactions of the experimenters are already impressive. It is hardly too much to say that ethically Russia is now in the swing of a counter-revolution led by sincere Communists reeling from the shock of their first contact with reality.

Take the old problem of marriage, for instance. The government has already rescinded the first tradition-smashing code and passed the second of what is likely to be a long series of experimental marriage laws. It has farmed out to private families as many as possible of the abandoned infants it originally planned to have mothered and fathered by the state. It begins strongly to emphasize the advantages of "home training" and the importance of the family as "the cell" of the future society. It has recognized the family as the legal unit for holding and inheriting farm lands. In most of the new housing schemes "private kitchens" are exhibited as the chief improvement over present overcrowded and too-communal housekeeping. In one day I happened to meet a young bourgeois, a survivor of the old order, who strongly approved the Communist legislation on marriage and divorce, and a young Communist who bitterly denounced it. The bourgeois declared that marriage is the one relation in life in which the Russian to-day is absolutely free. The Communist, a girl under twenty, already divorced, vowed that she and all her friends would never again marry one of their own generation. "Marriage to them," she

said, " means no more and involves less thought and responsibility than going to the movies. It is degrading."

In the Ukraine a Communist told me that he had had his first child baptized secretly, in violation of all communist principles, because she was a girl; reverting to the stock paternal pattern, he wished her to be brought up " in the old-fashioned way." For a similar reason the head of a village Soviet in the Moscow gubernia insists on maintaining a church where there never was a church before. " We must do something for the women and children," he said, " to counteract the new laws! "

The Communists constantly advocate in practice a puritanism they deny in principle; the remotest village is plastered with posters distributed by the government to warn the people against taking advantage of the laws enacted by the government. Unregistered marriages have been legalized, but in these posters registration is strongly advocated. Abortion is permitted by law, is even performed by physicians designated by the state; it is discouraged in practice as dangerous to health. Casual sex relationships are legitimatized, yet nowhere is there a franker and more widespread propaganda against profligacy as the cause of the widely prevalent venereal disease. Vodka is made and sold by the state, is the most profitable of all the government monopolies, and the crusade against vodka led by the official Communist organ, the *Pravda*, is in the most vehement tradition of the Anti-Saloon League. In these reversals and contradictions you perceive how confused and abnormal is the moral atmosphere. Communist Russia has tried the alternatives to the old conventions; it

swings today between two poles — between the first wild license of the Revolution, when the revolutionist proved himself by being coarse and proletarian, by going collarless and dirty and wanton, by smashing the bourgeois furniture and the bourgeois commandments, and the stern asceticism which demands the dedication of every energy to building a new order, frowns upon drinking, smoking, dancing and the most innocent amusements, and in the case of the more zealous Comsols manifests itself in excesses of moral censorship strongly suggestive of the outbreaks of the Ku Klux Klan in Southern towns.

The debate on the 1927 marriage law revealed the deep moral antagonisms dividing the Bolsheviki themselves and their sympathizers. After eight years' trial of the first law its sponsors differed as fundamentally as to how it should be revised as conservatives differ from radicals in the oldest parliaments; they agreed only that any change would be for the better. The debate began in 1925 and lasted for two years. It was marked by the first appearance in Russian history of illiterate peasant women at a national congress. I have heard their speeches described by those who listened and who had to marvel at the expressiveness and power of these women from the fields who rose in their frayed homespun, with shawls or faded handkerchiefs on their heads, and poured forth demands and protests that had never found a voice in Russia before. They came from distant villages to say that while they knew nothing about speaking in public and could not answer the city comrades who spoke so fast and so well, they did know that there was something wrong with a law that reduced a marriage

of many years, many children and a lifetime of shared labor to the status of a day's infatuation. They made a profound impression, but though the law was modified as a result of their pleas and the still stronger opposition of many Communist leaders, it was passed without substantial change.

The chief point of controversy and the provision of the new code differing most from the old is the clause legalizing all unions whether registered or not. On its face this provision seems to allow even easier marrying and unmarrying than the other experimental legislation which it supersedes. The old law, rushed through in 1919, when nothing mattered so much as nullifying the past, recognized only marriages recorded in the improvised registration bureaus, suggestively known as "Zags." It was intended primarily to abolish church marriages. The new law recognizes any kind of union as marriage; a church marriage thus falls into the category of unregistered marriage contracts and can be proved "actual" in case of dispute or divorce. The priests, however, now make it a rule to solemnize no marriages that are not first registered, so that for the Orthodox the practice is about the same in Russia as it is in Italy or France, where a double ceremony is required because the church witnesses the sacrament and the state the civil contract, and neither power recognizes the absolute competence of the other.

No child born in Soviet Russia is ever illegitimate. The chief object in legalizing unregistered unions was to fix responsibility for the support and care of children born under any circumstance. Thus while ostensibly the second law removes the last compulsion from the

marriage bond, actually it limits the freedom of the first law by holding casual lovers strictly accountable for the consequences of their errant fancies. The Russian may marry and divorce as breathlessly as he pleases under the Soviet code so long as there are no children, but while he lives in a country where his income is rigidly limited, where birth control propaganda makes little headway and the birth rate steadily increases, he cannot be very promiscuous or uncalculating when he is obliged to support the offspring of any union.

One reason for the protest of peasant women was that they objected to dividing the farm or impoverishing their own children to pay *alimenta* to the partner or offspring of some new marriage, just as the second or third wife in these easy exchanges protested against the *alimenta* required for the original family. In answer to these objections the final draft of the law decrees that *alimenta* must be paid only in cash or produce and forbids a forced division of land or live stock. It raises the legal marriage age for girls from sixteen to eighteen. Thus the Communist Code is modified to protect "the rights of property"; it is re-drafted to transfer from the community to the individual the care and support of children of irregular unions; in many respects it makes parents even more responsible than the law of other countries. In case of divorce property owned by either husband or wife before marriage remains personal, property acquired during marriage is divided, with the qualification mentioned above in regard to farm property, and if the husband is unemployed or incapacitated, the wife pays the alimony. Both parents, in proportion to their earnings, are charged with the support of the



children. The mother is always awarded the children if she desires them, in which case the father devotes a third of his income to their support.

Divorce itself, apart from these cramping consequences, is the easiest procedure in Russia. It takes endless time and trouble to do everything else. To change one's residence involves the most exhausting and complicated formalities. To exchange an article purchased in a state shop is an interminable business. I tried it once and grew so interested in the process that I went on just to see what would happen; in the end it can't be done! But one can change a wife or exchange a husband without any bother at all. To marry, the couple may take the five minutes required to sign their names in the register of the "Zags," but it is not necessary. To divorce, the sole condition is that one of the partners desires it. As no marriage is held to exist without mutual consent, there is never any question about granting a divorce; the cases brought before the People's Court are only for the adjudication of property rights and to ensure the support of children. Marriage is less sacred than the right to a shelter. The partner who can be divorced without any legal steps whatever cannot be ousted from his domicile without a tedious process of law, and as it is practically impossible to find space in Moscow, divorced couples are often obliged to go on living in the same room.

It was an American, however, who had the prize experience of easy divorce. By some mistake the permit for his stay in Russia last summer was issued in the name of himself "and wife." Being unable to read Russian he knew nothing about this clause until his attention was

called to it by the official to whom he applied for permission to leave the country. "The permit is made out for yourself and wife; therefore you cannot leave without her," explained the official. "But I have not and never had a wife, therefore I cannot leave with her," protested the American. "Can't you just cross out the 'and wife' business?" The Russian regarded him with horror. "Impossible!" he declared. "What is written in an official document is written and can never be changed. No, your time is up; you cannot stay in the country any longer and you cannot leave without your wife. I do not know what you can do." There was a long pause of furious and painful cogitation. "I know what I can do!" cried the official at last. "Divorce is free in Russia. I can grant you a divorce." That easiest of all Russian solutions was no sooner thought of than it was accomplished.

If any one imagines that this wide liberty gives satisfaction to the liberated, he need only talk with the older women, of whom many are tragic in their desire for security instead of freedom. If they are peasants, broken by hard labor in the fields and the bearing of many children, they complain that their husbands take strong wives for the harvest season. All are bitter that the law allows them to be so easily discarded for the young. Even among the young one meets the desperate and the disillusioned, already exhausted by experience and blaming a code that gives them no protection from themselves. Above all, one should listen to the scandalized elder Communists, most of them only theorists in free love, who rise up when they see it in practice and thunder forth the oldest commandments with a moral

indignation worthy of a bishop. The unbridled individualism of the progressive marriage is the antithesis of communism, they say; in a collectivist society relations between the sexes should be more rigorously regulated than in any other. Discussion of marriage is universal. It reaches outposts that care nothing for the eight-hour day or the dictatorship of the proletariat, and makes articulate what sounds like an entire population of outraged wives and rebellious husbands.

At that, however, I doubt that the divorce rate in Russia is higher than it is in the United States. It is enormously high in Moscow, where there are more divorces than marriages, because in Moscow foregather the great majority of the emancipated. It is low in the rural districts. Statistics are vague and difficult to get; the latest I could obtain for Great Russia were for the year 1925, when the average for town and village was one divorce for every seven marriages. In the Ukraine for 1926 the number reported was only one divorce for every fifty marriages. It must never be forgotten that Communist Russia is only one Russia, and that for the majority of the country folk the tradition of the irrevocable marriage and the inescapable family resists all the relaxing legislation of the new regime. Church weddings and church christenings are as frequent and as festive as they ever were. The "Red Weddings" originated by Trotsky as a substitute for the elaborate church ceremony appeal mostly to the Communists, and not to the most realistic of them; there is something faintly Rabelaisian in a ritual which abolishes the marriage vow and solemnly pledges the bride and groom to raise the production of the factory! The children of the

"Red Christenings," or "Octobrina," are met everywhere. The state institutions, of course, are full of them. In one children's home I talked with fifty of these small "Octobers" in a bunch, all under seven, and all pertly puzzled when I had to confess that there were no "Octobers" in my benighted land and that "Lenina," "New Era" and "October Twenty-fifth" were not among our favorite names for children.

As for moral standards in general, while it is true that the daughters of the Revolution now enjoy the same freedom as men and that a single standard of judgment is applied to both, it is also true that there has always been a certain casualness and lack of reticence among Russians in regard to the vital facts of life. The moral standards of the villages were never high. The matter-of-fact way in which men and women are indiscriminately bunked together in the two-berthed compartments of the sleeping cars, the promiscuous, unpartitioned family life, the perfect naturalness with which people dress and undress on the river banks of any town, are at first startling and disconcerting to the stranger. Soon, however, he becomes as unconscious and un-selfconscious as the Russians themselves, and he perceives that with these free Arcadian manners goes a frank and healthy absence of emphasis on sex very refreshing after the offensive over-emphasis of the Latin and the muggy sentimental complexes of the Teuton and the Anglo-Saxon. "Suggestiveness" is never the note of Russian life or entertainment. One immediately notices the sharp difference in that respect between the theatre in Moscow and the theatre in New York, Paris or Berlin. What the Russian stage has to say about sex it

says directly and without double meaning, and it does not say much. It has too many other ideas to express. The kind of drama censored in New York might have a chance in Moscow, if it were good enough, but the uncensored soiled performances that draw the biggest crowds on Broadway would shock and bore a Russian audience.

Birth control is not popular. The Russian birth rate shows a greater growth since the war than that of any other European country. The Communists incline to resent and denounce propaganda to control it as a bourgeois campaign to limit the strength and numbers of the proletariat. It is only in an effort to combat the "greater evil" of abortion that the Department of Health recently recommended a cautious dissemination of information on birth control. Abortion is performed free in government clinics when the reasons are considered justifiable by the authorities. In the case of working women the operation is followed by three weeks' vacation with pay. But the government is alarmed at the rapid spread of the practice. In 1926 there was one abortion to every four births in Moscow. The Communist creed includes no dogma on the sanctity of life, born or unborn, but it preaches fervently the duty of building up a strong and fecund proletarian state. Motherhood is a social function and mothers and children are looked after and safeguarded to the full extent of the resources of the government. Far from stigmatizing or discriminating against the unmarried mother, she is given the first preference in the employment agencies. The mother employed in an office or



engaged in professional work is entitled to three months leave with pay when her child is born. The mother who works in a factory gets four months, two months before and two months after confinement. When she returns to work she deposits the baby every morning in the day nursery maintained by most factories for the young children of working mothers. She is given time off to nurse her baby, but all other nursery care, whether in these crèches, kindergartens or pre-school institutions of one kind or another, is as much a factory activity as the school for apprentices or the workers' committee.

The Palace of Motherhood stands on the banks of the Moscow River, only less impressive than the Palace of Labor. It is one of the most ambitious clinical laboratories in the world for the study of the important problems of maternity and infancy, and is always one of the "sights" for the excursionists who in Moscow constantly make the rounds of social institutions as in other capitals they follow the megaphone in the sight-seeing charabancs. And not only in Moscow. I visited children's hospitals, foundling asylums, sanatoria and summer camps in a dozen villas in the remote country, in Tsarskoye-Selo and the island suburbs of Leningrad and along the warm coast of the Crimea. A tenderness for children that has fashioned the most delightful toys in the world flourishes in these Soviet homes; the attitude of the youngsters toward the doctors and nurses is charmingly gay and familiar. I remember a roomful of rickety babies playing with colored chalks in the bright summer villa of some departed bourgeois who had weird taste in futuristic decoration. When we entered the children and the attendants were rocking with laughter over

the attempts of the bed-fast three-year-olds to draw the faded cubist creatures on the walls. We decided that the copies were more intelligible than the originals, and we saw them all, because the doctor who was our guide could not get out of the room until he had admired every one of the twenty or thirty masterpieces. In a vacation house for factory children a dozen youngsters raced upstairs helter-skelter to show us their toothbrushes. A toothbrush per child is one of the wonders of the new order that even the proletarian attendants cannot take with the proper nonchalance.

Show places such institutions may be; show places they are in the sense that everything the visitor is shown, and everything there is to show, are only samples of goods not kept in stock. Many are survivals of the excellent child clinics of the past. One could easily imagine that all welfare work originated with the present regime were it not for the now pre-historic remains demonstrating the progressive social activities of the zemstvos. There are in Russia to-day less than three thousand institutions of any and every kind under the Department of Motherhood and Infancy, and of these three thousand for a population of 150,000,000 fully half are what is known as "consultations," valuable as far as they go but meaning no more than a district doctor, lawyer or midwife to whom people over a large area may apply for advice. No nursery care is provided for rural babies, for instance, and no social insurance for peasant women. In contrast to the town worker with her four months' leave and factory crèche for her infant, the peasant mother often returns to her back-breaking labor in the fields the day after her child is born. The state has not

yet relieved the little country girls of eight or ten of the care of half the babies of Russia. All that has been done so far favors the town proletariat and is pitifully inadequate in the country, but it does show, in some cases very impressively, the type and scope of the work the Soviets sincerely desire and plan to do everywhere.

It shows, too, the interesting developments and changes in the original program. One of the sardonic jokes played by history on the Bolsheviks is that they are still condemned by their critics for what they intended to do and didn't, and approved by their admirers for what they never intended and would not do if they could help it. The nationalization of women was never contemplated, but the socialization of children is undoubtedly fundamental to their conception of the state. The first idea was to institutionalize the children of working mothers, who in time would have included all mothers, and to vest in the state the entire care, support and education of the young. The number of state institutions was much greater in the early years of the Revolution than it is now. Many had to be closed for lack of funds, and more because the plan did not work. Dr. Lebedeva was the first to recognize that it did not work. The mortality of the babies in the state institutions gave her an unanswerable argument in favor of home care to combat the Communists who held out against a surrender to the family idea. A Communist of great courage and of utter devotion to her work, Dr. Lebedeva does not hesitate to announce that experience proves that the home offers a better environment for the development of the child than the institution, and

that in the great majority of cases the asylum-bred children were mentally and physically sub-normal. The whole policy of her Department is not only not to take any children out of their homes but to find homes for the orphans and foundlings who are the natural wards of the state. As many as possible of the public babies are now nursed by private mothers.

As a parent, then, the collective state is an acknowledged failure. This acknowledgment is the more striking because the solidarity of the family and the privacy of the home are to the Communist definitely reactionary traditions. The home in the old Anglo-Saxon sense of castle and sanctuary, if it can survive anywhere in the modern world, certainly has no place in a strictly economic system. In Russia you see that the Bolsheviks are right in attacking the home as a bourgeois institution. It is. It demands a certain amount of unnecessary space, a margin of non-productive leisure, a modicum of care and useless comfort. It is impossible without economic waste.

Lenin's "large socialist households" replacing the "petty households" and "bourgeois coziness" of the past, are not fairly represented by the jumbled communal living now experienced by the city proletariat. They were not fairly represented by the early experiments in the farm communes, which failed not because the land could not be worked in common but because the household could not be run in common. There were always disputes in the kitchen. Now you can go into any kitchen in the shared apartments of Moscow and find the big stove unused and six women cooking on six little one-burner oil stoves called "primuses." The

manufacture of the "primus" has become one of the big industries of Russia. "There, if you like," remarked a woman member of a house committee, "is a symbol of how women take to communism." Ten years of the kind of herding experienced in Moscow has killed the desire for any collective living and restored an almost bridal glamour to the private cooking stove. The only time I ever heard a woman official lyrical and romantic was over a new and unshared kitchen. She was living on half rations to save five hundred rubles for a down payment on a two-room apartment in a "co-op." Another Communist I knew had bought such an apartment and was subletting one room to a second family for more than his monthly payment, a common form of petty profiteering. I asked the tenant, who was hard pressed to pay the high rent, why he did not complain to the authorities. "But my landlord is a member of the Party," he shrugged. "And if I were thrown out, where could I go? Even if I could find a room at the legal rent, I should have to pay a big bonus to get it."

The co-operative houses now in course of construction more nearly approximate the ideal of the future. They are stark and solidly built rectangles of red brick, architecturally in striking contrast to the garden colonies of *case popolari* in Rome and the exuberant ornament of the latest workers' co-operatives in Prague and Vienna. Otherwise, Fascists, Socialists and Communists have almost the same idea of popular housing. Small, well-lighted, private kitchens were a feature of all the apartments I saw. I supposed each apartment was for a single family, but the director was careful to



inform me that such luxury might some day be possible, but not so long as the cost of building is as high in Moscow as it is in New York and half the wage of the Russian worker must go for food.

One huge block of buildings being built by the railway men's union had many communal features, including a garden court, an assembly hall, a nursery and a restaurant. It was four stories high and the ramp which ran up from floor to floor I should have hailed as a great modern improvement over the stairway if I had not seen the same thing a few weeks before in a sixteenth-century palace in Rome. The superintendent sighed over the difficulties of satisfying a co-operative, but when I took for granted that the trouble came from the differing ideas of the women he replied with surprise that women had had no part in the plan and did not attend the meetings. He asked many questions about apartment-house construction in America; wistfully he hoped that Russia might attain in time to a style of collective living comparable to the kitchenless, laundryless, nurseryless, vacuum-cleaned and co-operatively owned dwellings multiplying so rapidly on the fabulous shores of Manhattan Island.

The American system is profitable enough to release nearly half the inhabitants of these capitalistic cells from any occupation other than that of being wives. In Russia the wives have to work, but they are still not so ready as American women to give up the "slavery" of the kitchen. Housekeeping in the littered kitchens of Moscow would be immensely simplified if the women could be induced to organize the cooking for the group. Instead, they work all day and buy primuses to cook at

night, all at the same time, six different messes of the same kasha or six separate pots full of the same cabbage soup.

Women are instinctive philistines. To say that the Revolution affects their lives more than the lives of men is only to say that the arteries of women are more tangled in the ties that must be broken if the consistent communist society is to be established. With the most revolutionary will in the world, only in exceptional cases do women reject the idea of romance in love, permanence in the family, stability in the home. The Communists are quite right to fight these ancient snares and temptations to acquiring property; they are more dangerous to their cause than foreign armies. Equality for women in Russia is so far a hard equality. I have heard the best revolutionists say that it degrades as often as it emancipates. To one Kollontai, mercurial prophetess of free love, there are a hundred steadfast puritans like Krupskaya. And Krupskaya is more identified with that slow procession of the women of the proletariat I have seen plodding along the Main Streets of the Soviet Union. They are women who will not go back — but what a force they are and will be for consolidation! Most of them have weighed the new laws, shrewdly and with proletarian matter-of-factness, and have found them not good enough for women.

I came out of Russia with a strong impression of almost universal dissatisfaction with the present legislation dealing with marriage, the home and the family. The one prediction perfectly safe to make is that it will be changed. "We need a Nep in the domestic field," smiled one of the many women doctors in Russia. "The

period of moral chaos, of ' militant communism ' in the social sphere, has lasted too long."

Meantime, it is important to remember that the daughters of the Revolution are comparatively few. There is always the other Russia, and there the majority of marriages and homes, such as they are, have held together for the same reasons, sordid or sublime, which yoke people elsewhere, and will probably continue to yoke them until a Lenin discovers some emancipation from humanity other than death.

## THE SOVIET GENERATION

THE FRENCHMAN who once expressed a wish to be born again as an English man or an American woman if he lived to-day would probably choose to be born a Russian child. Not because a Russian child is better off than the children of other countries, but because in Soviet Russia it is the child who occupies the pedestal given by popular tradition to the English husband and to the American wife. All the emphasis is on the new generation. For the young the red sun rises and the unshackled planet reels upon its elliptic way. The history of yesterday is mythology. What has been is evil or illusion; what is old is wrong; the real world began in 1917. A revolution intervenes between two generations

and alienates one from the other so completely that the estrangements made so much of in calmer societies seem merely rhetoric. Russian children belong to their parents and are part of their families less than any children in the world. An entire educational system and the resources of an incomparable propaganda are concentrated on emancipating them from the folk ways of the past and from all the beliefs, standards, customs and ideology of their elders.

Russia is perhaps the only country in which the rebellion of the young was not spontaneous but was kindled and fostered by the old. Bolshevism was never a youth movement, and its revolution was not a revolt of the intolerant and patriotic young, like the Fascist uprising in Italy. It is easier to rouse children to the call of nationalism, to the gay insolence of "Youth! Youth! Springtime of beauty!" than to the cry of internationalism, the social passion of "Arise! Arise! Arise! Ye Slaves!" Marx is the prophet of a former generation, of men arrested, so to speak, in conspiracy, who lived underground too long to be in step with the forward movements of men in the streets. All the Bolshevik leaders were middle-aged. There are still no young men at the helm, either of the Party or the government. Yet nowhere is youth so exalted. Children are encouraged to take part in politics, and their ideas and opinions are given the most serious consideration. A debate on the new marriage law was reported in the *Pravda* in which the debaters were nine years old. Political education actually begins in the day nurseries, where the babies are taught "collectivist habits," and remains the most important part of the curriculum throughout



the entire school life. The students are trained to instruct their parents; the schools are self-governing; the Comsomols and even the Pioneers are consulted in educational reforms and exert an astonishing influence in the local Soviets.

The result is a cocksureness in the attitude of the young new even to the visitor who comes from America by way of Italy. The swagger of the young Black Shirts is mostly for pride in their great past. Young America is intolerant of interference; left alone, it is quite willing to park the seniors in their quaint old world. In Russia the only world is the world of the future. The old are cowed; they know they are survivors. Either they cling stubbornly to habits of thought now loudly scorned or they cringe unbearably before the young. In ten years a whole generation has been brought up remembering no way of life other than the present; after the revolutionists themselves it is the only trustworthy instrument of abolition. The factory workers who behave most like owners are the apprentices; the older men are settled in the mould of employes. In the villages one may see the old people gathered in an oddly defiant liveliness, singing old songs or telling old stories or sneaking off to church, while the young look on with bleak or lofty condescension. "The old will be old!" they seem to say. But it is when the young appear in mass formation, in a Comsomol Congress, a sports' meet, a great mobilization of Pioneers such as now makes a new kind of encampment on the historic plains of Balaklava, that one gets a true perspective on the much-advertised Soviet Generation.

One Sunday soon after my arrival in Russia I

witnessed a drill of the sports clubs of the Moscow gubernia. All morning long the streets in the center of the city swarmed with sturdy and business-like young athletes, of a heavier and huskier breed than the international contestants in the Olympic games I had seen a few Sundays before in Athens. Soon the Red Square was filled from end to end with an army of drilling youth. The boys and girls were all alike in vivid shorts and jerseys. Their bare brown legs gleamed in the sun. Their heads were thrown back in that pride of proletarianism so much more arrogant, to those who have seen it massed, than the pride of aristocracy. They wheeled and marched and saluted with all the martial snap of the Red Guard. In the salute they spread out the five fingers of the right hand in a gesture signifying that the workers will one day rule the five continents of the earth.

For ten years the Soviet government has had a free field, and no contradiction, in its effort to produce a generation of muscular materialists and healthy realists. And already, although athletics were almost unknown in Russia a decade ago, the cobbles ring with the march of regiments like these. They are impressive when you remember that all gymnastics, mental as well as physical, are only to strengthen them for one battle. In the school every subject, arithmetic as much as biology, geography as much as history, is related to the class struggle. Only in Russia have the workers won. The rest of the world is benighted and hostile, as the American may learn when he ponders over his imperialistic history as taught to the Russian child. There is no explanation for anything but the materialist explanation. Psychology

is an abolished word; since the psyche is not admitted and all reflexes are physical, reflexology is the orthodox term.

Outside the school it is the same. If the child goes to the movies, he sees pictures illustrating the school texts. If he listens to the radio, now bringing the voice of Moscow into nearly every village, he hears programs broadcast by the government. All his books are edited by the Department of Education; fairy tales are forbidden. The newspapers read and discussed in every school issue from the state presses. The theatre — and where else does the theatre flourish in so many forms, on so many thousands of improvised stages? — is censored and supervised by the same authorities. If the children need vacations, they are drawn into the network of government rest houses. If they take a trip, it is an educational excursion to institutions exhibiting what is being done for the workers. Wherever they go, whatever they do, they meet Lenin and the Red Corner. Everything in their lives is designed to make them class-conscious and to remind them that they are building a new world, the first realist, scientific, equal world ever created.

More than any other educational system, the Soviet system aims to fit the human being into his environment — but a new type of human being into a new kind of environment. It has the only curriculum entirely formulated and superintended by a political party. All textbooks are written or re-written to conform to the tenets of the Communists; even the cultural autonomy and separate school administration guaranteed to the six republics forming the Soviet Union do not extend to doctrine. In the Ukraine, educationally the most

advanced of the republics, the schools are graded otherwise than in Great Russia, the courses are differently arranged, an effort is made to revive the Ukrainian language, and the name University has been dropped in favor of Institute. But the texts used are identical. They are the same everywhere. Freedom of language implies no freedom of thought. Education is administered in each state by members of the Party in the interest of Communism.

Every school in the Union, moreover, is dominated by its Young Communist organizations — the Octobers for the children of pre-school or kindergarten age, the Pioneers for pupils in the grammar grades, the Comsomols, or League of Communist Youth, for high schools and colleges. From these battalions of probationers, numbering more than 2,500,000, the membership of the Party itself is recruited. Unlike our Scouts, whom they otherwise resemble, the Pioneers receive constant political education. By the time they are eighteen and become Comsomols, they are experienced leaders; their ubiquitous and powerful activity is, as I have suggested, one of the most amazing phenomena of the contemporary scene.

The few schools I saw were the special schools open in summer, kindergartens, factory schools, workers' faculties and demonstration schools, but as I observed the school product in the cities and the villages, and talked with teachers and theorists responsible for educational experiments, I perceived that all questions about the future of Bolshevism must be asked and will be answered in the schools. Whatever outsiders may think about the influences modifying and mellowing

the Revolution, the most transient insider can never forget that the Russia of tomorrow will be exclusively inhabited by a generation that has learned nothing but the lessons the Communists teach. How they have done it I don't know; how in less than a decade an absolutely untried system of education has been constructed from the ground up, with not a single text-book saved from the past, and has somehow been made to work by teachers seventy per cent carried over from the old system, is one of many marvels and mysteries I was never able to fathom. The miracles of successful organization accomplished by a government of totally inexperienced amateurs, with a genius for inefficiency, are almost more bewildering than the perpetual evidence of their failures.

Here at any rate are upwards of ten million youths primed to deny nearly everything taught in the schools of other countries. Their indoctrination, of course, is a success of propaganda, of which the Bolsheviks are masters, and of propaganda in the field where it is most likely to be permanently effective. The Russian young have had no communication with any other young, but they have collected so many kopeks for the workers oppressed and starving in foreign lands that they believe they have a mission of succor and redemption. Theirs is not the Siberian outlook of the elder Communists, and their cheerful complacency is not darkened by the gloom of prisons or the loneliness of exile. They have never known a Tsar or seen a society in which they were not the privileged class. Nor, on the other hand, have they the exile's perspective or the old revolutionist's experience of other civilizations. They are a youth set



apart from the world as no educated generation has been in modern times. The point is worth stressing for the reason that though the farmers may go on strike against the government, as they are now doing, and no policies can stand against their refusal to produce, the success of the Communist philosophy depends, in the long run, upon how far the present education "takes" with the young, and in particular upon the final effect of proletarian culture upon the village Pioneer.

When an exceedingly youthful official of the Teachers' Union — he could not have been over twenty — mentioned that more than four hundred thousand of the teachers in the Soviet schools had been teachers under the Tsar, the wholesale transfer of the pedagogical force from one regime to another struck me less forcibly than the suggestion that the school system in the dark old days must have been nearly as extensive as it is to-day. By that time I had been in Russia long enough to learn that the Bolsheviks are much less abolitionist than the world believes. I knew that the poorly paid and hampered personnel of the imperial schools had been among the sections of the population readiest for revolution. But I had heard so much about the campaign to liquidate illiteracy and provide schools for all that I had a vague notion that nothing had ever been done about it before. I asked how many more schools there are now than there used to be, and the young man had no hesitation in digging out the comparative figures. He had already called attention to the rising but still depressing average of teachers' salaries — \$22 a month in the rural schools and \$35 in the secondary schools

— and compared the 28 per cent increase for social and cultural work with the 69 per cent increase for industry in the 1926 budget. Now he produced Eppstein's official report to show that there were 3.6 per cent more primary schools and 4.6 fewer secondary schools in 1927 than in 1914.

The truth is that under the zemstvos, the elective provincial and district assemblies established in 1864 and more or less perpetuated in the soviets, rural education in general and agricultural and co-operative education in particular had made remarkable progress, in the face of government opposition, during the revolutionary decade before the war. Education, like everything else, began late in Russia. It was sponsored by the church, but Orthodoxy so tardily reflected the scholastic zeal of the medieval church of the West that it was not until the middle of the seventeenth century, and then under the goad of missionary Jesuits, that the first Russian institute for higher education was established at Kiev. The first university, that of Moscow, was not founded until 1755. Peter the Great, in so many respects the historical ancestor of Lenin, was the first autocrat to dream of educating the proletariat with the idea of preparing Russia for the industrial era then dawning in Europe. He opened the earliest secular and technical schools. Popular elementary education was never encouraged by Peter or any Tsar, but universities and gymnasia rapidly developed under imperial patronage. The Russian scholars distinguished themselves in many fields; their researches commanded and still command the respect of the scientific world. The universities provided excellent education for the few; and foremost

among the few for the rebellious intelligentsia who during a hundred years fomented the discontent that blazed in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

It is interesting to remember that hardly one of the Bolshevik leaders was not educated in an imperial university. They did not invent the educational establishment to which they have given a new direction. But the visitor now exploring Russia for the first time praises or blames them for it nevertheless; they are always praised and blamed for the wrong things. The newcomer is shocked by Russian ways and habits, by disorder, bureaucracy, political police methods, which the Bolsheviks certainly did not originate, and which — barring the eternal Okhrana turned Cheka turned G. P. U. — they are doing their best to overcome. And he is as frequently enthusiastic over institutions with which they had no more to do. As a case in point, in a small Russian town a little natural history museum is exhibited as an example of the way in which the Soviet school is linked with the life of the countryside. The museum is integrated into the school "Complex"; the children use it to study the crops, the trees, the animals, the peasant crafts, the soil and stones and human life of their own village. It is made a working part of the school; everything in Russia is made part of the school; better than any other educational system it is designed to fit the child into everyday life.

Now it chanced that a short time before I had seen almost exactly the same kind of museum in the little town of Tighina, which used to be called Bender and stands on the Dniester River at the Bessarabian end of the broken bridge that once carried an express train

from Kishinev to Odessa and now cuts off Russia from its old province. With small resources and an absurd little laboratory, the tiny natural history museum of Tighina also presented a lively panorama of the life and resources of the neighborhood. Its director was a scholar and an enthusiast. He was, of course, a Russian as Bender was Russia. For twenty years, he told me, he had been engaged in correlating the natural sciences to the familiar environment of local school children. I may add that the Tighina museum was exhibited by the proud prefect of the town as an example of the progressiveness of the Rumanian regime! I often thought of it when I was shown institutions the Bolsheviks have wisely adopted from the past. The whole system of pre-school education, exhibited to visiting teachers with justifiable pride, was worked out long before the Revolution in the progressive Pedagogical Institute of Petersburg. Shatsky now has a freer hand in developing his Complex method than he had in the old days, but his experiments began in 1906 in the Moscow Settlement. Both the successes and the failures of the Soviet school system demonstrate that it is not an unrooted growth; only its spirit and its objective are new.

No one claims that the universities are as good as they were. The number has increased as compared to 1914 and decreased as compared to 1923 and the attendance grows; but many so-called universities are such in name only. Included in the count are the three foreign colleges at Moscow and the Oriental University at Tashkent, seminaries erected by the Communist International to train missionaries to go forth and preach the gospel. The students are drawn from all parts of the

world, mostly from the East, and are subsidized while they are prepared for the missionary field. It is difficult, however, to keep the doctrine pure; Paul Radek, head of the Chinese University, followed Trotsky into exile. Dozens of his disciples had to be sent back to China. In the regular universities many of the courses, such as the classics and the humanities, have been abolished as useless. The remaining faculties are weakened by the dispersal and suppression of the former professors and by the attempt to make them narrowly socialist. The early enthusiasm for the Rabfacs has cooled. These workers' faculties originated in the desire to open at once to ambitious workers the hitherto closed doors of knowledge. Students with the most rudimentary schooling were nominated by trade unions or peasant groups and were accepted without examination to be prepared post haste for the universities. In those days "universities" opened overnight all over the country; for the first crazy, chaotic months nobody in Russia was doing anything but going to school. A few of the Rabfac students made good, but the greater number not only failed but crowded out better-equipped candidates and reduced the universities almost to the level of elementary schools. Now the workers' faculties are fewer than they were and most of their students are prepared for the technical institutes.

The effect of reducing the universities to socialist seminaries has been destructive. It is in the field of elementary education that one must look for evidence of the constructive program now at last fairly under way after years of confusion, lack of equipment, and a



perfect anarchy of individual experimentation. Although the number of primary and secondary schools has remained about what it was in 1914, and although there are still too many signs of the wreckage and neglect which caused Professor Karlgren to report, in 1924, that "the Russian school system lies in dust and ashes," the enrollment of pupils has increased by more than a third, and a general program for the rural and Unified Labor School has been revised, modified and put into operation.

The Bolsheviks inherited sixty per cent adult illiteracy together with the universities. There are no satisfactory figures to show the results of a ten years' campaign, but it is beyond doubt that the general level of literacy has been raised and the popular desire for education incalculably quickened. A fresh appetite for learning has been stimulated in one of the great dormant intelligences of the world. I am not sure that dormant is the right word for anything so greedy as the ranging mind of the unlettered mujik. The Binet tests indicate that the peasant children rank higher in intelligence than the children of the town, and you have only to watch a group of peasants being taught to read by a village youth to get an unforgettable impression of the revolutionary passion to learn and to teach. It is a sight for tears. If you have winced at the cruelty of the young to the old in this rough world, you melt before the patience of an anxious boy, himself knowing little more than the alphabet, as he labors to pass on the difficult knowledge to his puzzled elders. The land is shrill with "Down with Illiteracy" campaigns and Comsomols determined to impart information at any cost.

At the same time there are eighty thousand unemployed teachers and twenty per cent of the children of school age, one-half in the villages, cannot go to school. It will be five years more at least, probably longer judging by present progress, before all the young of Soviet Russia can enjoy the educational advantages of the children of Bulgaria or Rumania, where education is now free and compulsory.

Meantime, since there is not room enough for all, the children of the proletariat are given preference. The discrimination against the old bourgeoisie extends to their children; the class struggle is so cruel in the school-room that the young "bourzhui" who are admitted often suffer as hard a fate as those who are excluded.

This policy is short-sighted because the whole purpose of the new school system, as Lunacharsky frankly declares, is to abolish the class distinctions of the past and make every child in Russia a communist and a proletarian. Literacy in the Soviet sense means first of all political literacy. In the latest version of the little red school-house the emphasis is on the red. A boy cannot learn to drive a car or stop a leak without being schooled in the Party watchwords that spread over the land like a new language. The great lesson to be learned is collectivism. The individual is trained not for the state, as in pre-war Germany or present-day Italy, but for the class. From the day nursery — and pre-school education is regarded as the most important in the entire course — to the university, the young of the Soviet Union are poured into one mould and stamped with one image, the image of a warrior agile to do battle for the supremacy of the workers of the world.

Russia is a vast school of communism. This school is called the Unified Labor School, and is divided into two grades, the First comprising four years of elementary teaching, from eight to twelve years, and the Second a three- or five-year course of secondary training. The Seven-Year School is the norm and compares with our twelve-year grammar and high school courses stripped of non-essentials and adapted to a single and more practical end. Wherever it is it reflects the life around it; near a factory the factory is part of the school; in the country the village is the blackboard; where the new electrification plants are building near Moscow and Leningrad the children study light, in the Donetz basin they know all about coal.

The first and most distinguishing mark of the Soviet school is that it is never out of touch with homely and concrete reality. Not only is the curriculum based on the life and work of the neighborhood, but it is constantly in contact with the activities of the local Soviet, which in its turn has a committee on education under the central Commissariat. The same interrelation vitalizes the subjects of the curriculum. All interest is developed from a local and focal center of interest, and one known and familiar topic is followed to all its unknown tangents. This is the Complex, the broadest possible extension of what is known in the American school as the Project. In the fall of 1927 all the school children in Russia concentrated on the Complex of the progress of the Soviet Union during the ten years since the Revolution. In the history laboratory — the most casual class room, furnished mostly with charts and posters, is a laboratory — they analyzed the growth of

the Communist Party; agricultural development was studied as biology and the collective farm as economics; the electrification program formed the course in physics and the students in mathematics wrestled with Gosplan statistics.

The school unit is the group. That is the second peculiarity of Soviet education. The children work in groups and are judged as groups. When the babies of working mothers are deposited in the day nurseries their home clothes are put in a bag and they are all numbered and dressed alike. This is partly for cleanliness and convenience but it is also symbolic of the system in which they are thenceforward merged. In kindergartens, vacation houses and children's homes I have seen hundreds of little boys and girls with shaven heads, indistinguishable one from another in the uniforms that progressive institutions of other countries are now discarding. The aim is against differentiation. With such an aim there is, of course, no competition. Prizes, examinations and individual promotions are abolished. The class is rated as a whole and as a collective studies its Complex and is passed on.

All this fits the student into the system. The school like the state is realist, collectivist, and rigidly sectarian. No government in history has ever been so powerful in keeping even the rumor of any doctrines but its own from those whom it educates. From the dawn of consciousness the child is trained in a dogmatic and unquestionable materialism. Stalin told a group of Americans that the evolution trial in Tennessee would be impossible in Russia because the Communist Party pursued a policy of militant defense of science. The Russian teacher

would be tried for the contrary heresy, for questioning the literal interpretation of the Marxist bible, or advancing even as a scientific hypothesis the idea of God or the existence of the soul.

But the schools are also self-governing, and I was always perplexed by the contrast between the freedom encouraged in the schools and the restrictions hedging the lives of adult citizens. No students organize their school life as freely and independently as they do in Russia. They decide on school policies, make their own programs, impose their own discipline and have the right, although it is almost never exercised, of dismissing their teachers. Corporal punishment, or any form of punishment so far as one can see, is forbidden. Some teachers complain that student rule leads to anarchy and others are enthusiastic over its success. From a very limited observation, confirmed by the testimony of others, I should say that it works remarkably well. The director of a correctional institution for homeless children assured me that order was satisfactorily maintained by the "collective opinion" of his charges — reclaimed waifs from the streets of Moscow! — and that the teachers never had any trouble. Assuming that such miracles are true, and I do not doubt that the dominating Comsomols and Pioneers are more formidable to their fellows than any faculty, one constantly wonders where this training in self-government leads.

Perhaps, since Communist teachers are comparatively few, its object is to limit the authority and influence of the instructors. Perhaps it is an experiment. The lively empiricism which is the fourth mark of the new Russian school may in time nullify all the others.



Education is still in the laboratory. In each volost a well-equipped and very interesting school is devoted entirely to testing out pedagogical ideas and methods. Two marriage laws have been found wanting in a decade of social experimentation but the schools have tried out dozens of incoherent theories and at least three general programs.

The aim of the first education law, like the first marriage law, was to separate the school from the church. It abolished all private, zemstvo and municipal schools, established the Unified Labor School and decreed a grandiose system of free, compulsory and universal education which every teacher was to work out for himself. To read the first education law now is to smile at the superstitious faith in decrees of those utopians who called themselves realists. In 1920 a tentative program was dropped into the whirlpool that had once been, as far as it went, a well-organized school system. In 1924 a definite curriculum was issued by the Scientific Council of Education under the chairmanship of Krupskaya, widow of Lenin. Krupskaya specialized for years before the Revolution in developing a workable plan of socialist education. She is the mother of the audacious school system that impregnates every branch of knowledge with the philosophy of Lenin. When the 1924 program was found impracticable, too rigid in principle and too vague in application, Krupskaya, with something of Lenin's tenacity and flexibility, asked for suggestions from all the teachers of the Union. On the basis of their criticism, she formulated in 1927 the New Program, now in operation.

This plan represents a long stride back to the

specific from the early generalizations. It still stresses the underlying principles of the Communist creed, collectivist habits more strongly than ever, but there is a significant change in temper and method. Marxist dogmas are now indirectly suggested rather than preached. The proletarian is not deified and the capitalist is not damned as roundly as of old. Notably modulated is the tone of the anti-religious propaganda. The change from the 1924 program, which constantly refers to religion as a means of exploitation and slavery, to that of 1927, which places the emphasis on developing through nature study a materialistic ideology, indicates the line of attack by the critics in the field and is a commentary on the results of experimentation much more illuminating than the observations of any outsider.

"We are only trying the new program," I was reminded by the Commissar of Education. "Nothing is fixed in our system. We are always experimenting, learning by mistakes. Remember that the Marxist theory and philosophy have never been applied in actual school work before, and the application requires a constant process of change and adaptation."

To Lunacharsky the schools are only one agency of popular education. Ever since the Revolution he has been in charge of them all, the theatre, the museums, music, art, moving pictures, literature, every cultural activity summarized in that expressive and useful word, the Proletcult. I do not know what the Russians would do without the abbreviations by which they atone for the long and involved names of their institutions; to the foreigner the vivid little words made out of initials

are like a short cut to the language. And without the same kind of paring down I do not see how Lunacharsky ever gets around to all his vast and varied duties. The job of Chief Censor alone needs a thousand eyes. I did not wonder that he sighed a little wearily, the day I saw him, when he turned from the comparative simplicities of art to the heavy complexities of the educational machine. I have hardly suggested them here. I have not so much as mentioned the system of technical and vocational schools, regarded in the Kremlin as the most important of all if the essential program of industrialization is to be carried on by politically trustworthy technicians. Or the schools of research, of high quality because manned by scholars and removed from the open field of controversy. Or the confused and gradually expanding attempts at agricultural education, the experimental farms, the thriving Jewish colonies financed in the United States. Every recruit in the Red Army goes to school during his two years of compulsory military training. When they emerge from that mill the conscripts are literate and ready to assume political leadership in their native villages. Although I had only glanced at all these schools — what was, what is, and what hopes to be, the last so much the rosier view — I could sympathize with the Commissar of Education when he declared that the re-organization of the schools was the slowest and most discouraging of all his staggering tasks. "Please remember," he begged, "that it is not ready to be judged."

The campaign of education has inevitably formed a generation more at home than its parents in the Soviet system. I have not a doubt that this Soviet-educated

generation will continue to use the Soviets. Whatever happens to the governors, the general structure of government will remain as it is. It is true that there are rumors of reaction among the young. "When you give them their head," said one old Communist, "you never know where they will go." They are reported to be turning from realism toward romanticism. Out of a large group of essays written for a Comsomol paper by pupils of the secondary schools, it was noted with dismay that the favorite subjects — the group plan works both ways! — were drawn from Arthurian idyls and legends of chivalry supposed to be unknown to Russian youth. I heard talk of an "epidemic" of religion among students. The Communist Party itself had to rebuke Comsomols for taking part in religious festivals and singing in church choirs. The girls were accused of getting sentimental ideas of love out of the novels of the past. I do not know how much truth there is in such gossip, but imagine a country where such things actually are gossip, where one whispers as if it were a scandal that Nadja is reading Sir Galahad or Ivan has been seen at mass. It would be almost too human if these emancipated young collectivists should develop the old individualist or family complex and become pillars of the church and defenders of the sanctity of the home.

There is a foot-note to this story of the Soviet-izing of the young. Every visitor sees it first, and is so shocked by the sight that the most widely known Russian youth are the *bez priziorny* (without shelter), the homeless children flapping along the main streets of cities and the main routes of travel like ragged flocks of animated

scarecrows. They have summer and winter routes, like birds; they haunt every railway station; they beg and steal and curse and scavenge from Leningrad to Sebastopol. Sometimes they have the faces of evil old men and sometimes of tough and swaggering children challenging the world. In Moscow they sleep in doorways, in asphalt mixers, under heaps of rubbish, in the gutters. Many of them are diseased, mutilated, drug addicts or pedlars of drugs. They have a kind of outlaw organization; they move in groups and terrorize the street vendors as with wild-animal cunning and swiftness they swoop down and steal their stocks. They have their own collective against collectivism; alone in Russia these hard, unhuman, reckless child hoboos defy the Communist hierarchy, the Gay-Pay-Oo and all the proletarian powers. They will not work, they will not march in the proletarian parade; they are the only fearless anti-socialists. They are explained as the orphans left homeless and destitute by the World War, the Revolution and the famine. Nobody seems to know how many they are. Their number is put at between 300,000 and 500,000 in all parts of the Union. All that the earnest official in charge of reclamation work in Moscow could tell me was that their number now, whatever it is, is fifty per cent less than it was in the worst years, whatever that was. About ten per cent are girls.

When I asked why a government so good at rounding up political suspects did not gather in these wretched waifs, I was told that they could not be "coerced." Only the criminals could be arrested; the rest must go voluntarily to the institutions provided for them. Yet during the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the



Revolution, when foreign workers' delegations and other visitors flocked to Moscow, the streets of the capital were cleared by magic of every homeless child. They can therefore be rounded up by coercion or otherwise when it seems desirable. At other times, there are not enough shelters, the work of reclamation is too casual and sporadic, and by now these children have been neglected so long that they have become habitual and irredeemable vagrants and will not stay in any institution. No definite statistics have been kept as to the results of the efforts at reclamation. I was informed that 27,000 are cared for in the Moscow district alone and that 4,000 are now at work or in high schools. An attempt is being made to place them in the regular army.

For some reason the only shelter for the *bez pri-ziorny* we were permitted to visit was situated many miles from Moscow, a two hours' journey by train followed by a long drive in a decrepit droshky. The home was a shabby but pleasant old country house on the banks of the Moscow river. Three hundred girls and boys ranging in age from five to sixteen romped freely through the house and grounds. They looked healthy, happy and remarkably at home. Some of them served us tea and slices of bread and butter and conducted us through their "laboratory" schoolrooms. They seemed to have no remote connection with the wizened waifs of the streets. It was a "mixed home," we were told when we asked how the youngest children, the "Octobers," could have been war or famine orphans. These Octobers were the most alert five-year-olds I have ever seen. They had all heard about America. I asked what they imagined it was like. "Tall buildings, lots of automobiles and

trains, people prettier and talking differently from Russians," snapped one infant. We were interviewed by a grave yellow-haired girl of twelve. She wanted to know if workers were well treated and lived happily in the United States. She doubted our answers, having studied in the laboratory our oppressive methods, and hoped we would report what a good time Russian workers had.

Into Greece, five years ago, were suddenly flung more than 100,000 orphans, naked, hungry and half dead from exposure. These 100,000 amounted to one-fortieth of the population of one of the poorest and most disorganized countries in the world, also in a chaos of civil war and revolution. In proportion to the population, a million homeless children constitute for Russia only one-fourth of the number thrown into Greece with the deportees from Asia Minor. It is true that Greece had help; the American Near East Relief took care of about one-fourth of the refugee orphans. But the help given to Greece by America was as nothing to the help given to Russia during the famine. There has never been a Greek regime with a fraction of the power of the Soviet government, yet not a child is shelterless in Greece to-day, nor has been since a month after the deluge. There have never been homeless children wandering around in Poland, Serbia, or any other war-devastated country.

It is inevitable that one should ask why a government proposing to solve so much bigger problems, preaching to the world the rights of the submerged classes, claiming to lead in welfare work and social science, should have done so little for the *bez priziorny*. For these vagrants are, above all, the Soviet Generation,

the Children of the Revolution. Without homes, without families, without traditions, they are just the material Communists have been seeking for a fair and unhampered experiment in socialization. So long as they persist they cast dark doubts upon every boast of the ruling powers.

IKONS

IN THE HEART of the oldest Russia waits the little town of Rostov, famous for its ikons and its bells. It waits because this is Russia. Anywhere else it could never have kept the bright secret of its pink Kremlin and its sky-blue lake. They would have been painted so often and with such pigments that by the time the traveler came to see them he would be disappointed not to find something even pinker and bluer. As it is, Rostov breaks upon the unexpectant eye as a gay surprise. It looks gay because it is full of churches, and churches are always the gayest things in Russia. Cupolas float among the turrets of the story-book Kremlin like captive toy balloons. The little *palata* within its ramparts suggests the romp of

children rather than the parade of Tsars. It is a nursery palace of low-arched and tiny chambers, stooping doors and whimsical, stunted stairways climbing up and down between rooms or hidden away in thick and brightly painted walls.

Rostov is the perfect illustration for a book on old Russia. But what it most suggestively illustrates is the change that comes over the Middle Age when it is transplanted — belatedly, of course, — from the terraced hills and crowded valleys of the West and left to grow wide and wild in the vast vacuum of the steppes. Compared to Assisi, say, it pictures all the difference between old Russia and medieval Europe, between the Eastern and the Western Church, between the praying past of the Latin and the Byzantine.

We arrived in Rostov from Yaroslavl on Saturday night and drove in an ancient droshky over a shadowy rutted road to a dark inn. If the inn-keeper was surprised at the descent of four Americans where Americans are only a legend, he was as unconcerned as all Russian inn-keepers seem to be. When we insisted he got out sheets to cover the blanketed cots and opened all his doors to give us a choice of unaired and empty rooms. In the hall was one trickling water tap at which we performed our sketchy ablutions. Perhaps we slept. I remember only that we were roused in the very early morning by the loud bass chorus of the bells.

The bells of Russia shiver but they do not swing. Instead of the clear peal of free bells they have the effect of sound in leash and clashing against chains. They are as discordant as Russia itself; passive yet shaken by inner tumult, slow and strange yet easily lashed into fierce



and subtle disharmonies that make tame and obvious the music of more melodious chimes. In Rostov the celebrated bells of the Kremlin hang in a row in an odd horizontal belfry; their chords are grave and deep, brazen and beautiful. As I leaned out the window to look at them I saw a green slope, rare in that level land, and on the slope a young man in a white blouse kneeling in prayer. He knelt rigid, bowed over a staff, as alone in an unawakened world as John the Baptist in the wilderness. As the bells stopped ringing he rose and stretched out his arms in a suggestive, inclusive gesture. Then he went striding down the hill and was gone.

When I think of the religious war waging in Russia for the last ten years — if that can still be called a war which is now reduced to resolute propaganda on one side and unorganized passive resistance on the other — I remember the clamor of sunrise and bells and pink towers and iridescent domes at Rostov and the solitary suppliant on the hillside. He typifies something in Russia that has escaped the Revolution. From his gesture I imagine he was praying for his country, for the Holy Russia embalmed in Rostov and many ancient towns. On all of them — Novgorod, Kiev, Yaroslavl, Vladimir, Moscow itself — the old orthodoxy has set its ineradicable seal. In their churches any day one hears the same imploring supplication, the endless “Lord, have mercy on Thy people,” rising from congregations still bewildered that they can call upon no help and fatherhood but God’s.

In such towns in the old days flourished schools of religious painting comparable to those of the primitive masters of Italy and Flanders. As churches more than

anything else distinguish the Russian landscape, so these sacred pictures, or ikons, a name derived from the Greek word meaning image, more than anything else distinguish the Orthodox from all other churches. Far more literally and completely than the frescoes and sculptures in old Roman Catholic churches, they are the scriptures of the illiterate. The ikonostasis, the vivid screen separating the congregation from the sanctuary, is an immense illuminated missal on which the whole story of Redemption, from Adam or Moses to the last disciple of Christ, is told in tiers of naïve and gold-incrusted pictures — a crowded gallery representing that Commune of the Saints as real to Holy Russia as the Commune of the Mir.

To-day the old ikons are more carefully preserved and treasured than ever before. It is forbidden under any pretext or at any price to take them out of the country. The altar screens are burnished and guarded in the ancient churches. In the historical museums of Moscow and Leningrad the development of this characteristic Russo-Byzantine religious art may be studied under the guidance of experts who glow with sympathy and enthusiasm for the piety that produced it.

“We come now to the pure Russian school,” points out the eager director of the ikon gallery at Leningrad. “You see how the religious feeling deepens, how spiritual and mystical are the distinctively Russian ikons compared to those painted under Greek influence. These are prayers and meditations: the Russian artists painted on their knees.”

There is no demand for ikons now. The state shops display church banners and vestments in one window, red flags and communist emblems in the other, all the

work of the same ecclesiastical weavers and embroiderers. The modern ikon painters decorate little boxes for jewels and cigarettes. I bought one in the Peasant Shop in Moscow for its color and exquisite miniature work. But when I examined it more closely, I found that the little blue figure on the scarlet horse was the same St. George to be found in a thousand churches and a million "ikon corners" in Russian households. In a green forest he is charging a dark dragon with the usual triumphant success of good over evil. The artists cannot help painting ikons on their box lids and their theme is still — is now perhaps more than ever — the struggle between the body and the soul, between the material and the spiritual.

Or between the devotee at Rostov and the devotee encountered a few days later at the exhibition of what may be called the most flourishing school of religious painting in Russia to-day. The window opposite a demolished church on the Petrovka in Moscow is full of the flaming posters of the "anti-God" propaganda, the new ikons which are distributed in the villages in the campaign to smash the old. In the lewd allegories of the latest iconoclasts, the fat beast is always the priest or the rabbi; the evil to be crushed is the enslaving and oppressive Cross; and the red-bannered St. George vanquishes superstition armed with the gospel of Marx and Lenin.

The collection was in charge of a typical girl Comsomol with a red kerchief tied around her head. She was dull and indifferent at first, but soon kindled to our interest. She grew zealous; she kept running down to the basement to find particularly choice specimens of blasphemy. There was something fierce and hieratic in her

attitude as she held out, like a crusader's shield, a poster depicting the world in chains forged by a capitalistic God.

Let no one doubt that under the confused and troubled surface of Russian life to-day religion is still the deepest pre-occupation of the people — alike of the passive majority who believe in God and of the active minority who believe in Lenin. This girl was a Communist; like all Communists she was as excited by religion as by plans for industrial expansion; she was as excited as the peasant to whom religion is always more interesting than the price of crops. It was inevitable that as soon as the cold postulates of Marx struck Russia they should be fanned by the strong winds of doctrine into a flaming creed. The reason the definition of communism as a religion has become so trite is because the parallel between the Communist Party and a dogmatic, fanatic and proselytizing sect is so immediately obvious that no observer can miss it. If he did, every Russian he met would at once point it out.

But communism is a good deal more than a sect and requires a more cosmic conversion than any religion. Its missionary zeal is not for souls but against the soul. If it were only an economic theory, a reform of government, a revaluation and exaltation of human labor, one religion more in the eternal philanderings of men with strange gods, it would not arouse such thundering contradiction. All other revolutions have invoked Christ as the first socialist, anarchist or *sans culottes*; in His name they have driven the money-changers and the pharisees from the temple. This one is a crusade against Christ;

the end of its crusading is a sepulchre in which to bury the idea of God forever. It summons mankind to a single concentration on the material facts of life. It is not without significance that its ban against all religious education is relaxed in favor of the Mohammedans; in common with Mohammedanism it has not only a political but a moral aversion to the whole Western religious system and all its property-respecting, squeamish, apocalyptic prophets, from Moses to the last reviser of the English Prayer Book. Its own prophets have been schooled in conspiracy. They have spent their lives in lying for what they think is the truth. No order of men on earth ever boasted so frankly that their end justifies and glorifies any means. They challenge our civilization with the extreme logic of that civilization, force the issue between a world populated by contented economic units, perfectly adjusted to a material environment, amply and equally supplied with bread and circuses, and a world inhabited by soul-encumbered malcontents, wasteful, imperfectly coordinated, wanting cake when they are hungry and insatiable for stars.

"We have no need for the hypothesis of God," said Stalin to the American Labor Delegation. "We are 100 per cent for science, and science requires no faith."

That is the theory. In practice — well, of course in practice most theories crack. As the moral code founded on the Ten Commandments too often honors its decalogue in the breach, so the infidel must have his faith and the atheist his God. I suppose nothing so startles the visitor in Russia as the extent and character of the cult of Lenin. Ikons one expects in the mother country



of ikons, but not that the iconoclasts should immediately reproduce the old ikon corner of the peasants in a "Red Corner" to Lenin in every factory, shop, school and public institution in the Union. Still less, that the Communists should adopt the Orthodox belief in the incorruptibility of the corpse as a mark of sanctity. Whether so preserved to confound the believers with the spectacle of this incorruptible atheist, or to satisfy some deep atavistic instinct, the enshrined body of Lenin bears a curious likeness to the remains of patriarchs and saints exposed in silver caskets in the churches.

Probably no man in history has grown so soon to the stature of a god. His words are already scripture texts. "As Lenin taught," "According to Lenin," "When Lenin declared" — such phrases are the commonplaces of every debate. The factions argue over the interpretation of Lenin as the Christian sects dispute over the sayings of Christ. There is growing up an immense literature of commentary on the doctrines of Marx and Lenin, a bulky exegesis as meticulous as that of the best scholastics.

Considered as a way of life, the system that "recognizes neither authority nor obedience" asserts the one and demands the other with the rigidity of a religious order. The Communist Party consists of professed members and novices, or candidates, about 800,000 of the former and about 400,000 of the latter. The candidates are on probation from six months to five years, depending first upon their antecedents and then upon their docility under discipline and their fitness for the tasks necessary for the rulership of a vast empire. The Party has no interest in increasing its membership. It is lit-

erally an elect, proud and exclusive, a new aristocracy. The larger it is the greater the possibilities of schism and dissension. The candidates must prove themselves thoroughly proletarian. Hence the periodical purges to get rid of useless or unworthy members and the constant demand for a fresh infusion of the red blood of workers "direct from the bench." Within the ranks, the discipline is so strict that I met many ex-Communists who admitted frankly that with the best intentions they were unable to endure it. It extends even to the founders of the faith, so that within ten years Trotsky and Zinoviev, Rakovsky, Kamenev and Joffé can be driven from the temple they built for daring to criticize the policies of the present high priests.

Obedience is the essential communist virtue. Chastity is not insisted upon, though the elders are far more austere in their private lives than their doctrine requires. Poverty is extolled. Formerly no party member was permitted to take a salary of more than 225 rubles a month, whatever his job. This rule has recently been relaxed in favor of technicians, whose "reliability" in a Party sense is so important, as was proved by the scandal in the Don coal basin, they are now allowed to join or remain in the ranks while taking whatever pay their work can command. No member, however, is exempt from the performance of "good works," which consist mainly of political service and propaganda and willingness to go wherever sent, whether to form a "cell" in Siberia or on a mission to China. The rewards, aside from the compensation of consecration to a cause, are the rewards of belonging to the ruling caste and being in line for office.

No church was ever more dogmatic or arrogated to itself wider spiritual and temporal powers. Communism claims the world as its parish, it has its well-organized hierarchy, its secret councils to deal with heresy, its sentences of excommunication. It has an "Index Expurgatorius" compared to which all ecclesiastical censorships are impotent. Not a book or a pamphlet can be printed in Russia without its imprimatur; it controls the press and the universities. It is so comprehensive a theory of life that the tightest of all bans against unorthodox ideas can make "counter-revolutionary" almost any kind of speculation — political, economic, religious, philosophical, even literary and historic. With insignificant exceptions, no new book or play of romantic, idealistic or religious tendency has been or could be produced since the Revolution. Many of the old works, however, manage to survive. One is struck by the popularity of stand-bys like "Hamlet" and the most sentimental Italian operas.

When I asked the urbane and cultivated Mr. Lunacharsky, censor of all the arts, how I could get a "bourgeois" book printed if I lived in Russia, he answered, smiling, that if I lived in Russia I would not write a bourgeois book. And when I inquired if he thought good literature or art could be created under such restrictions, he replied that he thought it could, but intimated that for the moment it was not being created. He added that propaganda could be very good art; felt deeply enough, it might even be the best art. His trouble was not that there was too much propaganda, but that there was too little that was worth anything.

"In the schools, we do not allow religious propa-

ganda of any kind," he declared, " but neither do we allow any direct teaching of atheism." Theoretically, this may be true. Theoretically, Russia to-day enjoys perfect freedom of worship. The state owns all ecclesiastical property, but leaves the use of churches to any congregations able to support them by voluntary contributions. Of the sixteen official holidays recognized by the Soviet Union, all save six are church feasts. I witnessed the anomaly of the observance by the state of a religious festival, August 15th, the feast of the Assumption, which was ignored by a church still clinging to the Julian calendar.

Actually, while church buildings are employed for other purposes, and no one knows how many ministers of religion are in prison and exile as a result of the first furious persecution of the church as a counter-revolutionary institution, in every part of the country churches are open and crowded with worshippers. This statement applies not only to the Orthodox, but to the Roman Catholics, Jews, Protestants, and the innumerable queer sects that attest the crazes and excesses of a people always intoxicated by religion and seeking escape in spiritual ecstasies from material misery and oppression. Non-conformists are more various and eccentric in Russia than anywhere on earth. They range from underground fanatics, practicing rites creepily suggestive of the jungle or the Eleusinian mysteries, to the most advanced agnostics. Some were already communistic, like the Old Believers of Siberia, many were revolutionary and all were forces of dissidence preparing the way for the success of the Revolution. They are freer under the Communists than they ever were under the

Tsars. No longer does the Pale or other civil or religious disability restrict the Jew. The vigilance of the censorship has not prevented an evangelical sect from printing a new edition of the Bible. The Baptists, a generic term used to denominate Protestants of many persuasions, appear to flourish in an atmosphere of special favor and immunity.

Lunacharsky will not admit, however, that any sect is favored. Leaning back behind his littered desk in the rather disordered Commissariat where the collective mind is being moulded, he assured me that while the government does not frown upon the zealous evangelicals, whose mission is also to attack the priests and ridicule the old religion, he considered the Russian Church preferable from a communist point of view because it is more disorganized and therefore more easily weakened. All conflicts between the believers he seemed to regard as faintly humorous. But he sat up when I suggested that the old church was certainly preferable to the lover of art and that it seemed a pity to displace by meeting-houses of the most unimaginative type the domes and belfries that give color and charm to the Russian landscape.

"Ah, there," agreed the Commissar of the People, "you have hit upon the one thing that will eventually kill these new sects. Russians will never be permanently satisfied with a religion that does not give them mystery and beauty."

He mentioned the Tolstoyans as among the sects most difficult to confute. Now the Tolstoyans are not a happy instance of perfect toleration. The revolutionist excommunicated for his heresies under the old



regime has been lately honored by an anniversary edition of his complete works, but his followers are persecuted for their pacifist views. Three officers of the Tolstoy Society were sent to Siberia while I was in Moscow. Many others were in prison, although it is characteristic of Russian paradox under all dispensations that the prisoners were let out one evening to hear an address made before the Society by Roger Baldwin. The Orthodox Jews complain bitterly of the constant baiting of Jewish Communists, and indeed the lot of the Jew in the new Russia is far from cheerful. Aside from occasional outbreaks of anti-semitism, which dies hard after centuries of ostracism and pogroms and is not lessened by the preponderance of Jews in the Bolshevist administration, the Jew has no disabilities except economic disabilities. But these are disastrous for a people almost exclusively engaged in private trade. It is not too much to say that the Jews who have not gained by forming part of the governing personnel have suffered more material loss on account of the Revolution than any other Russians except the aristocracy. The Catholics, who minister mostly to the large colonies of Poles, have suffered grievously and suffer still whenever there is any strain in Russo-Polish relations. Even the "Baptists," though apparently free from interference, nurse their own grievances.

The truth is, of course, that the Communists have an almost equal and impartial hatred for every religious creed. The advantages are all to the state cult. It has the power and the position to wage a tremendous propaganda against all religion, and it uses that power to the utmost. Its avowed purpose is to destroy religion. The

whole organized strength and scorn of the ruling class are concentrated on that end. All the clergy are disfranchised as "non-producers." The communist doctrine is written into the entire educational system, and the public teaching of any other doctrine is forbidden until the age of eighteen — on the safe assumption that any one who has no religion at that age will never acquire it thereafter. The old are left to their futile pieties, but the young are diligently trained to be materialists and preachers of materialism. Talk to the youth; hear the astounding phrases repeated by parrot-like but fiercely earnest children about the beliefs of their elders, and you can gauge the extent of a secularization more drastic than any ever attempted anywhere except recently in Mexico.

The pressure is so irresistible that the wonder is that any religion in Russia stands up against it. Yet the constant complaint of the Communists is that the war on religion has failed. They cannot keep the atheist societies going; the ikons of the "Union of the Godless" cannot be made popular in the villages. This Union, a recognized branch of the Communist Party, engages in propaganda work among the factory workers and peasants; while I was in Russia it was re-organizing anti-religious workers and proposing new subsidies for missionary activity. The strong resilience of the religious force of the country worries the leaders of the Party. At the meeting of the Central Control Committee in April, 1928, Stalin reproached the chiefs for the recovered strength of the church. Such a revival, he said, could be explained only by the negligence and relaxed zeal of the Communists.

These complaints are the more impressive because the Orthodox church is to-day like a reeling, enfeebled body without a head. It is so completely disorganized, so lacking in leadership, that the bewildered congregations seem to function by themselves. Before the Revolution one of the largest and most powerful ecclesiastical establishments in the world, rich, entrenched, splendid and intolerant, it is now a perfect demonstration of the demoralizing effects of the subservience of the spiritual to the secular power. Since the suppression of the Patriarchate by Peter the Great, the Russian church has been hardly more than a department of an autocratic state. It was never a preaching or a teaching church; it developed no great moral leaders. The lower or white clergy were married and shared the misery and the ignorance of the people they served. The members of the hierarchy, or black clergy, were celibate monks, able, learned but politically servile and aloof from the masses. The tragedy of the church in the Revolution was that it was a slave church, untaught, unquickened, and too long schooled in the passive virtues of obedience and resignation. It was better able to suffer than to resist. Thousands of its members, particularly the clergy, bore exile, imprisonment and death with the courage of martyrs. The peculiar passion of the Russian soul for suffering, the belief that the divine design cannot be affected by human intervention, makes better martyrs than militants. "They" will be punished, say the faithful of the atheists; trust in a higher justice absolves the persecuted from taking measures themselves.

We were once walking in the deserted enclosure of an old monastery when a priest rose in our path with

the blazing eyes of an avenging prophet. He pointed out the desecrated tombs of dead bishops, a basement filled with torn and defaced church records. We could not understand what he said, but we felt the scorch of the terrible curses he uttered. His indignation was searing and terrible. No one, least of all the passing traveler, can do more than guess at the comparative strength of the forces in the religious conflict in Russia, but in that old priest, invoking amid ruins the thunders of the Last Judgment, I sensed a power implacable as the power of the Kremlin itself.

In spite of demoralization and disorganization, no central administration and no real provision, so far as I could learn, for the education of a future ministry, the Orthodox Church continues to function. The Living Church, an attempt to create a substitute for the old establishment subservient to the present government, never had any chance of life from the beginning. It was the hybrid offspring of Orthodoxy and Revolution, still-born, and therefore negligible as a factor in the struggle.

The "Living" church is dead, but the "dead" church somehow manages to live. One cannot press too hard the old charge of inertia, servility and obscurantism in face of the heroic hunger and raggedness in which so many thousands of its servants are now carrying on. There was somewhere in it some deep reserve of spiritual power and vitality. In Moscow the religion of the Communists seems triumphant; the more one explores the country the more one feels something indestructible in the Holy Russia of the ikons and the bells. It is stunned and incoherent; it never had much in common with the aggressive organized righteousness of the West. The

Russian has a devouring curiosity to know about God, but never the impulse to socialize Him, or to make a practical application of religion to the dull business of life. His soul is a kind of separate entity. But opposition is developing in Orthodoxy the first suggestion of the militancy of Catholicism. The fervor of the Communists is, I think, rather bracing to the believers. At least they are stiffest in the villages where the Comsomols have been most literal in the application of the new gospel. They are learning zeal.

Russia is to-day a battleground between the material man and the spiritual man. The materialism of Marx is put into practice for the first time among the one people in the world who are all mystics. The destroyer of God is first unleashed among the *Bogoiskately*, the Godseekers. Here is drama of the true Olympian range, the projection on the widest stage in the world of the primal human struggle. I do not pretend to have discovered how the battle is going. I felt in Russia the heavy weight of passive resistance against the anti-religious policy of the Bolsheviki. I could not help noting the reaction of such intellectuals as I met, men who in pre-revolutionary days scoffed at the pieties of the faithful and who now turn to religion as an escape from the rigid fundamentalism of communist materialism. Most observers believe that the effect of putting the Orthodox church on its own, so to speak, will be to strengthen and revivify it. But that depends ultimately on the success of the state educational policy. All the efforts of the government are now directed towards making the Russian of to-morrow a materialist and a collectivist. At least the urban youth of Russia is to-day irreligious; communism



has made remarkable progress with the young because Orthodoxy failed to teach and the Communists have had to combat only a tradition. It is, however, a mighty tradition. And this is a mighty struggle. On the outcome hangs more than the future of Orthodoxy or of Russia. The world is the parish of communism, which wages openly and to a logical end the war against the soul implicit in most of the inconclusive contests of civilization. On the outcome, therefore, may depend whether the rest of us — we who have so far dodged the choice between God and Mammon — will one day have to decide between God and Lenin.

## THE WORKER AT PLAY

Russia, everybody knows, is now a land of free vacations. Wherever we went, during the home-like mid-summer days, we heard of them. When we dragged into bright conversations captious questions about low wages or high prices or the cramped life of the worker in the "toilers' garden," as one of our guides liked to call it, we were always reminded of his unique compensations, above all of his rest houses and his vacations. All the people we met talked about their own holidays, official Moscow with a long sigh, as of respite from the almost unbearable burden of re-making the world. The Kremlin was emptying of the Commissars of the People. Contingents of factory workers were released daily for their fortnight's leave. The auburn-haired lady censor,

drooping under the pelting queries of undisciplined press correspondents, counted the days until her escape to the Caucasus. In the labyrinthine corridors of the huge quadrangle of the Labor Palace trade union executives were snared in the act of flight. They answered questions more fully and satisfactorily than any one else, but with only one eye on the questioner. The other was on the time-table. I got the impression that nothing mattered very much, when the tired proletarian is the gentleman whose fatigue sets the tempo of life and recreation, except that everybody should have a vacation, the longer and farther from home the better. Even the Russian prisoner gets two or three weeks leave every year to visit his family and help with the harvest.

And of course they are right. In a workers' republic vacations are the thing! When the laborer becomes dictator what should he first dictate but respite from labor? The business man judges communism by what it produces. He has every evidence that production costs are enormous under the Gosplan and that state subsidies and the overhead of industry are so excessive that high prices should be higher still to be economically sound. But the worker, in the early flush of ownership — before the sport shoe pinches! — judges by the owner's privileges he is able to enjoy. What is freedom except an extension of leisure and latitude, and what are class differences but unequal liberty to loaf?

Not that there is anything revolutionary in vacations. The summer and winter touring of the American plumber in the family limousine is the phenomenon that would really bowl over the world proletariat. But to the Russian workman holidays on the present scale are

new and radical. Moreover only in Russia is every worker paid for his vacation and given the full and exclusive possession of the choicest loafing places. The Bar Harbors and Newports of the Soviet Union are the resorts of factory operatives on vacation. The summer villas of the old idle rich, planted wherever the air or the view or the seashore might best be cut off and monopolized, are now the rest houses of the idling poor. The mountain retreats of the Caucasus and the warm beaches of the Crimea swarm with people from the plains to whom mountains and sea have hitherto been no more than fables.

We decided that the best way to see how the worker's rule works is to follow him where he plays. It is not so easy as it sounds. Out of the 10,000,000 organized workers in Russia there may be only 500,000 who can be accommodated in the state rest houses and sanatoria, and the majority of these, as the cynics add, may be functionaries and government officials. If that is so, I must have seen the whole 500,000 en route. Never were trains so packed with passengers as those going south through Moscow every day to the resorts of the Caucasus and the Crimea. Not only all the regular berths in the first- and second-class sleeping cars, but all the hard places were booked weeks in advance. We managed to secure accommodations only through the intervention of the all-powerful trade union headquarters, the one organization in Russia always able and willing to arrange anything.

At the Kursk station, the night we left, we lost Moscow and became suddenly relaxed and gay. We

also lost the porter with our bags and went scurrying around looking for them under moving mountains of bundles. The porter shrugged when we found him at last. How could he be expected to remember trifles like suitcases when everybody else was starting out with real baggage — sacks of provisions, mattresses, samovars and clanking cooking utensils? We were breathless when we boarded the bursting train, and then we had trouble rearranging our traveling companion, a Norwegian girl who after many months in Russia still balked at the idea of being berthed with a man. After confused re-shufflings of the combinations in the various coupés and the dispensing of a few extra rubles, she was put in with a lady delegate going to a trade union meeting in Simferopol, only to regret the next morning that she had not been satisfied with her first partner. The lady delegate deemed it unsafe to have the light out or the window open and talked all night because the quiet of the *wagon lits* made her nervous, accustomed as she was to the warm sociability of the hard coaches.

When finally we settled down the provodnik brought us tea from his hissing samovar at the end of the car. That is the rite for starting on a journey. You begin drinking glasses of weak-lemonade tea when the train pulls out and never stop until you arrive at your destination; then you rush for a glass of tea to refresh you from the fatigue of travel. In the hard cars you carry your own teapot. To keep the tea flowing there is a water tap over a crackling wood fire at every station. The raid of the teapots whenever the train stops is one of the excitements of the trip. Overnight travel is inevitable in this immensity and nearly all the hard cars are provided with



sleeping places, wooden shelves on which six persons can stretch out in each open compartment. Travelers carry their own bedding and all the comforts of home; they are never more at home than when on a train. They lie on their shelves and talk about the universe. The whole car joins in the talk. At the stations everybody makes a dash for hot water and food. The platforms are a mad mêlée of hawkers and buyers of sausages, whole roasted chickens, piroshki, cheese, tomatoes, loaves of crisp bread. Sometimes, with twenty minutes' leeway, you sit down in the riotous station restaurant and share your chicken with the *bez priziorny*, whose black claws, apparently disembodied, swoop over the edge of the table in search of bones and left-overs. The scramble is never hurried and always good-natured. The Russian on holiday is not boisterous or gay — was he ever gay, I wonder? — but he is more contented in a jam than any one else in the world. And he always travels in a jam. There may be uncrowded conveyances in Russia, but I never saw anything moving that was not overflowing. I can well believe that the railroads and all means of transport pay.

One is always re-sensitizing the plate to catch significant differences between communistic life and life outside, and sometimes I think the traveler to-day misses the general movement of Russia by concentrating on its new steps. We all go as solemn and portentous observers. A reporter might make a Sunday excursion to Coney Island without taking sociological notes, but if in Russia he goes on a picnic he is never allowed to forget that he is enjoying a laboratory test. I was off for the Crimea to

see the Worker at Play, and while I still insist that that is the most illuminating view of him, when I read over my first report and contrast it with the impression strongest at this moment I see that I emphasized the wrong thing. I hurried on to the arrival at the rest houses when I should have lingered over the journey. For if one is bent on significances, what is getting there to a Russian compared to the motion and agitation — shall we say the revolution — of the trip? Unlike the Frenchman he is never so comfortable as when he “deranges” himself. Have I not met workers who spent twelve days out of their two weeks’ holiday on the road? The going is everything. The vacation crowds moving are entirely different from the same crowds at rest. When we stopped at the resorts, they seemed subdued and vaguely depressed, but on the way everybody was buoyant and cheerful.

The American understands better than the European this young restlessness that is appeased by motion. It is partly a diffuseness and wandering of the mind. The American, too, is happier going than he ever is arriving. No one can fathom Russia; but we are, I think, less alien to this land and this unsettled people than we are to our ancestral Europe. Who but an American is the familiar of this enormous, uneventful earth, the same for hours on end outside the car windows? Only we know such prairies, such still and sallow Augusts, such loneliness of landscapes. When I got back from Russia I went out to central Kansas and saw a winter sunset levelling to one color the still fields around Emporia, fields as withdrawn and wide as a slowly swelling sea. “I should feel at home in southern Russia, it is like this,” said

William Allen White, who had not been in Russia but saw it better from Kansas than many do who cross the steppe.

Nowhere else save in Kansas, the Dakotas, and the corn belt is that endless repetition of the same thing which makes either monotony or largeness according to the native focus of the eye. The American scale is smaller; in this country everything natural is more constricted and everything made is bigger. Europe has woods where Russia and America have forests. Our rivers have the same incontinency as the Volga and the Dnieper and the Don, rivers without banks, uncertain of their spilling, affluent course. The Russian villages are to us unimaginably primitive, but they straggle like ours; the towns have the raveled look of the temporary in decay you see from train windows in upper New York and the Middle West. We, too, are wasteful, untidy and cursory. The roads of England are smooth between clipped hedges, the streams of France flow neatly between poplars, the German fields are sown in stripes and embroidered at the edges, the hills of Italy are planted stairways, made fertile and fragrant with the sweat of generations. All these are human and domesticated little countries, but what have kitchen gardens in common with Russia and with us, whose soil belittles man and leaves him homeless and defiant, so that we fling up skyscrapers and swing giant cranes and Russia imagines them so magnificently on the stage and on paper that they already whistle as if they were steel? Stirred by the same thin and delicate air the prairie and the steppe are kin, and the constructor and the constructivist have the same enormous dreams.

Until we got fairly into the Crimean peninsula, two days from Moscow, the country hardly changed. The peninsula itself is not Russian at all as one thinks of Russia. It is strongly Turkish and Tartar. Minarets are more frequent than cupolas and red fezzes begin to bloom among the dusty stunted trees at the railway stations. The Crimea is much less Byzantine than Moscow and old Russia, though one has memories in Sebastopol of Potemkin reviving the Greek legend as Prince of Tauris and of the Great Catherine ranging her court on these pale headlands and taking possession of the Black Sea as the potential Empress of Constantinople and the East.

The sea sweeps roughly into a U-shaped harbor at Sebastopol, and there is another U of long white buildings crowning the high bluffs. The town and harbor look deserted now, and diminished, as if the march of bare, sand-colored hills defiling to the plain of Balaklava were approaching closer and would finally overcome what was intended to be a proud city. There are British boys among the Pioneers camped on the battlefield where the British shattered the most persistent of Russian dreams. We could not have distinguished them in the bright red and green uniform if their voices had not sounded so loud and animated among the quiet Russian sight-seers in the celebrated Panorama of the Siege of Sebastopol. Their English-speaking guide pointed out where the English came into action. The children of my generation would never have known there was a Balaklava except for Tennyson, and I had a pang to hear the "Charge of the Light Brigade" reduced to "junk." "Of course, Tennyson is junk,"

echoed one young Communist in a strong North Country accent.

The long train discharged us all, teapots and bedding and passengers bewildered by the heat, into a disheveled plaza filled with buses of all varieties and high-stepping cars of forgotten shapes; it looked like one of the dumps for discarded automobiles on the edges of American towns. For us, however, it was novel and cheering to see so many motors actually waiting and ready to take us where we wanted to go; for the first time we felt as if we might be trippers anywhere. The two girl clerks from Moscow who shared our antique Lancia stowed away their bales and cooking kit and drew out gay Caucasian scarves which changed them into something more like the regular pattern of girls at the seaside. Thus, with colors flying, we started rattling over the mountains to Yalta, center of the Crimean resorts. But we drooped before we got there. We had four blow-outs on the way. "New Russian tires!" explained the driver disgustedly. And we were held up in two mountain villages by mobilization exercises.

It was the harvest season of the Red Army. As along the Volga a month earlier squads of civilians were being drilled to handle guns and put up defenses, so now the conscripts were assembling in the towns to begin their two-years' military service. The country is "dry" during the three days of mobilization. There are ceremonies in each village presided over by the local Communist and attended by a great gathering of families from the countryside. The boys looked raw, ragged and reluctant as they shambled along the roads. They had a tendency to wander out of ranks; once half a dozen made a dash up a



wooded slope and were sharply pursued and driven back by the mounted soldiers on guard. The recruits were inclined to jeer at the comrades in automobiles lined up at the side of the highway; they shouted "bourzhui" in the faces of the indignant girls in silk scarves from the government office. To the peasant the city workers are all "bourzhui" just as the peasants are all potential "bourzhui" to the town Communist. You use the term for almost anything you are not.

Wherever we went we saw preparations, in one form or another, for war. But here on these remote vacation coasts we had a new sense of the spread of the Red Army as we watched hundreds of sullen half-Turkish boys slouching away to be stiffened into soldiers. They will come back to the villages at twenty-one made over physically and mentally. In Moscow it is said that ten years of conscription have done more than anything else to "sovietize" the Soviet Union.

I do not know whether Yalta ever looked like the Riviera resorts to which it has been compared. It stretches within a rim of mountains on a curving blue bay; its villas, embedded in gardens fringed with cypresses, are more like the houses along the Bosphorus. All are now turned over to the resting workers and the gardens are trampled and overrun. Yalta is Moscow relaxed, more *en deshabille* than even Moscow is, but with the same effect of swarming, or of the lid blown off and the human pepper pot stewing under your eyes. The same scum of neglect tempers — or dis-tempers — the view. One is apt to dwell too much, perhaps, on the blighting effect of communal ownership on lawns and

walls and woodwork, the careless scratches made by the crowd on the fragile surfaces the private owner labors to keep polished. In Yalta one sees how many more people get pleasure and health in these crowded, run-down villas than enjoyed them when they were groomed and quiet and kept in repair. But what a training of communists there must be before common property can be made precious! If generations are distilled into the *noblesse oblige* which distinguishes the traditional gentleman, how long will it take to make a human being fine and selfless and responsible and public-hearted enough to be that much more obligated person, a good communist?

We get a bare clean room with iron beds, for which we rent sheets and towels, in the two-storied, rather sketchy Hotel de France. And I lean out the window and watch the proletariat on holiday parade. Most of the promenaders look young and vigorous. Old and tired workers, if they go to the resorts, are not in evidence. In Moscow the old are a multitude, but here few could be described as broken, or even slightly dented, by the wheel of industry or life. The crowds confirm your impression that the new Russia is for the young. There are flocks of somewhat bored-looking girls, sauntering boys, a fair balance of heavy middle age, noticeably few children. You see a functionary you have met in a Moscow office; he looks as preoccupied here as there. On the balcony next to my window another official labored all day over a voluminous report.

The fashionable resort costume of the girls consisted of sandals and slips of bright-colored calico with straps over the shoulder. They looked rather like a parade in

petticoats, but I admired the efficiency and economy of the uniform; the only thing the matter with it was that it was a uniform. The men promenaded in pajamas, in trunks or in white duck trousers with or without blouses. Some of them still carried brief cases. I saw one bronzed youth dressed in trunks and swinging a cane.

All the varieties of dress and undress, including that of the bathers on the stony beaches, were decent enough. Since nobody in Russia notices your clothes or lack of them, unless you are overdressed, everything is decent. But they were a little cruel. My Norse friend, when we went to the women's beach to bathe, said she did not mind being seen but she hated to look! And indeed the naked truth calls for courage. Such bourgeois screens as bathing costumes are cowardly but kind evasions. The bodies stretched in rows on the sharp pebbles, if they were as God made them, were not made beautiful; they were fat and foreshortened, flabby or leathery. Only the children were a joy to gaze upon, and never a beach in the world was so bereft of children. We should never have been noticed if we had not put on bathing suits. Then all the bathers turned to stare at us and we felt strange and shamed.

Yalta makes nothing of its brilliant setting. Like all the resorts, it is strangely silent and sad. The worker on holiday takes his pleasure seriously, almost dutifully. By day the crowds quietly sun themselves on the beaches; by night they solemnly walk up and down the dull, ill-lit streets. There are few diversions, moving pictures, two or three shabby tea rooms, a play on occasion, execrable music floating out from a couple of dim restaurants, a half-dozen dusty little souvenir shops. The nearest ap-

proach to revelry I saw was four men sitting on a bench opposite my window who reveled in talk all night. At dawn they were still at it. Once I was startled to hear them laugh heartily and in chorus — and realized how rare a sound is laughter where it can be so startling.

It is not easy for the proletariat to play. These are people who have never known holidays. They have no practice in the technic of pleasure, no such resourcefulness in the invention of popular amusement as makes places like Coney Island or Viareggio boisterously merry, and places like Palm Beach and Biarritz artificially gay. Also they are a people who have suffered unspeakably. They have forgotten how to laugh. Since 1914, with war, revolution, famine and terror, Russia has lost more than twenty million dead. In the playgrounds you see most clearly what a terrible price the proletariat has paid for its power.

To find gayety you must go to a sanatorium! The convalescents laugh and are happy, particularly the convalescent children. Hundreds of jolly and excellently cared-for youngsters are being cured of rickets, tuberculosis, bone diseases and plain starvation in most of the airy villas along the sea. No children anywhere are more cheerfully and gently tended. We were put into white surgeon's coats when we went to see them and all the children were in white, in white rooms, with white-robed nurses, and the sun itself blazed white through the open windows.

The white palace of the Tsar at Livadia lies beyond hills of neat vineyards, and there we found peasants vastly pleased with themselves. One was reading, too self-consciously, in the Tsar's green leather chair. A group

of village women sat sewing in the Tsaritsa's room, and one of them made a speech in German, perhaps a prepared speech, on the downfall of kings and the rise of the people there so dramatically demonstrated. A giant peasant with the eyes of a baby was in bed in the chamber of the Tsar Alexander in the ugly little Moorish villa built by the last Tsar's father. He got up when he saw us and followed us all afternoon, like a wistful Newfoundland dog, through the bright gardens and the broad terraces filled with deck chairs. We had no language in common, but whenever we smiled at him he murmured "America!" in a rapt voice, as if the word were a prayer. He was a peasant from the Ural Mountains who in the Tsar's bedroom, visited by Americans, was dazed by miracles. When I recalled the dark huts I had seen on the flat plains and looked upon the patriarchal figures stretched at ease by marble balustrades in this sharp glitter of cliffs and colored tides, I wondered how many imagined they had died and gone to paradise. And did any really go in the earthquake that a week later shook this coast and increased the ruin of the villas?

We went back by sea from Sebastopol to Odessa on the Steamship Tchicherin, one of the best of the Sovflot, a very little fleet for such a continent but big enough now to handle Russia's trickle of commerce with the world. It is not big enough, however, to accommodate the traffic between the Black Sea ports. We have been promised places — two rooms? Oh, three, all the rooms you want, the agent said with a flourish — but when we board the boat there is not even a berth and the agent is



as casual as if he had never worked in New York and learned American efficiency. It often happens so, he says; more people get on at Batum than they expect.

They are different from any travelers we have seen, these passengers who come from Baku and Batum and Tiflis. The men are not shaven bald or in blouses; they wear ready-made suits and hats and bright yellow shoes. And the women look languid and silken and oddly feminine. Where the oil flows, evidently there are ways of getting things that cannot be bought in Moscow. Here we are far from the Kremlin and on the edge of the outside world, with Greece and Turkey, Rumania and Bulgaria in the offing; "worldliness" creeps in.

The captain is entertaining a party in his cabin. From behind a fence of bottles he assures us impatiently that there is no room. The ship is overcrowded, a 4000-ton boat with 1500 passengers aboard. So we sit on the upper deck, between the black waters and the black sky, until the cold at midnight drives us in, and then the steward finds places for us in the dark dining saloon with others of the berthless. The sea begins to heave towards dawn, as the Black Sea does without warning — sailors say it is the most capricious and treacherous of all oceans; heads bump against feet on the long benches and cold waves slap the portholes. I think of the hundreds huddled on the lower decks with no protection from the storm. By morning it is over and in a gray noon we steam into the wide and empty harbor of Odessa.

Hilaire Belloc says somewhere that when first he went to Italy he marvelled that none of the books he had read ever told him that the houses were colored and often of marble and that the country people walked

with a freer carriage than any people in Europe. Because he had never heard of them, those were the first things he saw. And I should not have been so surprised by the fine sweep of the cities, or by the many Krem-lins besides the one in Moscow, by the huge monastic enclosures, above all by the frescoes in the old painted churches, if the Russian books I read had prepared me for the most obvious features of the Russian scene. As at Odessa, I was always being struck by the amplitude and foresight of the city planning; in contrast to Europe, Russian towns are of a country newer than America. The streets are now too wide for their traffic and the big business blocks and houses suggest resort hotels out of season. We looked into one fine mansion in a courtyard that seemed fumbling around to be useful. A couple of offices camped on the ground floor and upstairs a big ornate drawing room was being cleared for a club. The other chambers were filled with cobwebs and debris. The port was dead that had been built for so many ships, but the streets on Saturday afternoon had more liveliness and were in better repair than any we saw outside of Moscow.

And Kiev, on Sunday morning, with vague worshippers lost among painted saints in the purple shade of one of the oldest and most picturesque of cathedrals, with the blond Poles crowding to the Catholic church on the hill, with the far bank of the Dnieper swarming with bathers and looking like a fly paper from the steep height of Vladimir's hill; Kiev, with its vast streets and its three levels and the breath-taking silhouette of its great Lavra glittering like glass at the bold curve of the river, has the position and the deep roots and the grand

air of a really great city. There is something invincible about Kiev. It looks all that it is, the mother town of Russia, the big bread basket and silver sugar bowl of a continent, the ravaged survivor of eleven of the stiffest battles of the Revolution. It is not, like Yaroslavl, a ruin; it mends the shell holes and goes on. Kiev was the scene of the last pogrom. I saw there an unforgettable performance by the Habima Theatre from Moscow, the last of the season, and in the sigh that went up from the packed house as the head of the Soviet spoke of the debt of Kiev to his Jewish comrades, I felt the long tragedy of a suppressed race.

Sugar used to be the chief export of the Ukraine. I heard some one boast that as much sugar is grown to-day as before the war but none is now exported. "And that means," said my informant, "that Russians are eating sugar to-day who never tasted it before."

In Kiev we lost the vacation crowds and whatever holiday spirit lightens the coasts. Here the idlers were men looking for work. It was then the center of the worst unemployment and the labor union council was in session seeking for a temporary solution of Russia's most harassing problem. I saw them come out of conference as I waited for the trade union chief, worried and tired workers in blouses wrestling with the anxieties of statesmen and captains of industry.

On the way back to Moscow — or was it on another journey? — we were discussing a revolutionary drama on the boards in a popular theatre in Moscow, and we asked the worker sitting opposite what he thought of it. He was a railway worker, he answered, and had

never been able to afford to go to a play. We mentioned the free tickets distributed among the trade unions. " Yes, but who gets them? " he demanded. " Never any one but the officials and a few of their Communist friends." Was not a worker always entitled to reduced prices? " Yes, the reduced price of two rubles. If you are lucky enough to have work and get sixty rubles a month, how many times in a lifetime do you suppose you have two rubles for a theatre ticket? Have you ever tried to buy shoes in Russia? "

By this time the car was in an uproar. An angry comrade from the next seat berated our friend for talking so to strangers. For half an hour we were in the center of a furious debate which covered the whole field of special privileges for workers in a workers' state. I gathered that Russian workers differ as much in regard to those privileges as do outside observers. They differed as widely even in their facts.

Some of the debaters enjoyed all the compensations making up for low wages. They had taken trips, gone to the rest houses, which are not only in the resorts, it should be mentioned, but are scattered all over the country, especially in the outskirts of the cities. Wherever there is a pleasant and spacious country house it is turned over in the summer for workers' vacations. Some were living in the colonies of datchas, or summer bungalows, planted by thousands in the deep pine woods fringing all the towns. They were satisfied, belligerently satisfied. Others insisted that they had none of these things, that they were for the " privileged few " — strange never to lose that old familiar phrase! — and mostly for the Communists.

I cannot report which side had the better of the argument. Like all arguments, it was soon miles off the original track and we were completely forgotten. It never got so far off, however, as to deal with working conditions. What all those workmen were stirred up about was where, when and how much the system allowed them to play. Which goes to prove, I repeat, that the playgrounds are the testing grounds of all social and economic experiments. Communism, capitalism, democracy, dictatorship — what are these but desperate methods employed in the search for the perfect formula which will give men less work and more play?



## COMMUNIST ART

THIS is a chronicle of contradictions, and it is impossible to report paradoxes without sounding paradoxical. It should be understood, however, that the contrasts that are so violent in a report look different when seen in their native climate. There it seems neither strange nor inconsistent that destroyers of the past should be intensely absorbed in preserving the relics of the past. The same men who delight in buildings like gray packing boxes and horizons laced with smokestacks are carefully regilding every futile ray in the golden halo of the old Russia. It is their boast that they waged a revolution without destroying a single masterpiece of art. That boast is almost literally true, and very suggestive; but

it is still more suggestive that the radicals of revolutionary art, those who roar about throwing Raphael out of the Hermitage window and drowning the imperial ballet, are applauded even while they are overpowered by the conservatives. This is profounder than paradox; it is one manifestation of an impressibility which sways this people into courses that surprise themselves. When the players are Russian, it is easy to get unison from an orchestra without a conductor. Maierhold can gather people from the factories and the streets and make them and the audience collaborate in the dramatic realization of any idea. No choruses are ever like Russian choruses, as if all the voices were melted into one voice. Russians are fatalists because they are peculiarly responsive to the forces of destiny. They all share Lenin's singular virtuosity as an instrument of history.

That is to say that the Russian is essentially an artist. I can believe that after the Winter Palace was taken by assault the mob surged through without breaking a mirror. I imagine it stopping to look at the pictures and trying the chairs in the throne room. Lunacharsky went to bed, ill with despair, when he heard that the Cathedral of St. Basil was being shelled, and Lenin, seeing how desperately he cared for them, charged the sick man with the safeguarding of all the artistic monuments. The Russian is so much an artist that when you go to the play in Moscow, whether to the constructivist fantasies of Maierhold or to the more conventional and, it should be added, the more popular theatres, you are never quite sure on which side of the footlights is the better performance.

Observe the audience at the "Tsar Feodor" at the

First Art Theatre. The boxes are packed with factory workers, and the stalls are filled with men and women dressed in the same dull blouses they wear in the streets. The house is a monochrome, so that when the curtain rises the contrast shouts. It rises on color — the sparkle of jewels, the real brocades of royalty, gilded rooms, painted porticos, characterization so vivid that the words do not matter. When it falls the flushed audience stiffens again into the perfect proletariat. It is too perfect. You are flicked by the same sense of good theatre you feel sometimes in the tense offices wherein the comrades bend to the tremendous dramatic stunt of recasting and rehearsing a people and constructing a new stage setting for a world. Their performance is so broad and self-conscious that it has the effect of gargantuan satire, as if the hundred and fifty millions were fused into one automatic man — the “talking machine” of Maiakovski — in the spirit of the Robot comedy, to start a thunderous and sardonic laughter that will shake the steel scaffolding of civilization. It is not that the players are not serious; Russians are always more serious about art than about life. It is that you can see how they are carried away by the demands of their parts. Like the stark façades of the new architecture, they are almost too realistic for reality. The revolutionary decade has all the elements of a drama in which the Communists perform before an audience thrilling to the devastating satire of the theme and watching to see how it will be worked out.

The audience is always as good an actor as any on the stage. They are all artists, and that explains why some things are done so skillfully and others so clumsily;

they do extraordinarily well what they like to do. In all the expressive arts — propaganda, spectacle, dramatizing ideas — their success is remarkable. Where else could be imagined a smoking pipe organ of factory chimneys or conducted concerts of factory whistles and sirens to make the sounds of labor audible as music to the mass? No people can plan so magnificently. Industry has been more rationally organized in the Bolshevik program than it ever has been by industrialists. And only among a people with a dramatic imagination can the bold plan so simulate and so stimulate reality. In Russia the experimental method is safe because it is new as in other societies an institution is safe because it is old. It is altogether in character that the two most efficient pieces of work so far accomplished by the Soviet dictatorship are their plans for the future — and I do not mean that in any ironic sense but in recognition of a genius for planning as important as a genius for execution — and their care for the artistic inheritance of the past. The best job the proletariat has done to date is the task always associated with the leisure, taste and culture of an aristocracy. And that is the restoration, collection, reclassification and exhibition of works of art.

Here are the first revolutionists who began to house art before they thought of housing themselves; the first iconoclasts whose fury to possess the old monasteries seems a fury to atone for the monks' neglect of religious painting; the first mob that ever stopped to admire and protect the masterpieces. Lunacharsky could hardly wait until the battle smoke had cleared away from the Kremlin before starting to scrape away the successive layers of bad frescoes painted on the walls of the Uspensky

Cathedral for the coronation of each succeeding Tsar, in order to uncover the work of the early masters underneath.

When one remembers the fate of the churches and abbeys of England during the Reformation; the wholesale destruction of private and public treasure in the mad sweep of the French Revolution; the sacking of French châteaux during the World War; the business-like bombing of irreplaceable monuments at Rheims and Louvain, Ravenna and Venice, one looks upon what was saved in Russia with a new understanding of these militant Marxians who begin their reign of stark utilitarianism by spending half their time and much of their substance in carefully cleaning old paintings, and in arranging and rearranging, with a zest and skill they have not yet developed in factory management or efficiency engineering, the useless heirlooms of the past. Not a cracked ikon can be taken out of the country without the permission of the Commissariat of Education.

The multiplication of museums is one of the most interesting outgrowths of communistic ownership. A decree of October 10, 1918, nationalized and ordered the registration of all works of art by whomever held or possessed. This resulted in the acquisition by the government of more than 200,000 private collections of greater or less value. The number of museums grew from ninety-eight in 1917 to 636 in 1921; there was nothing else to do with many seized palaces, monasteries and country houses except to use them for museums. A systematic reorganization, weeding out and merging of collections have since diminished the number to 381 but the gov-



ernment ownership of every work of art makes Russia to-day preëminently a land of museums. The state owns all kinds of fantastic collections such as Postal Museums, Fire Technic Museums, Health Museums, Museums of Musical Instruments, of Toys, of the Theatre, of the Life and Customs of nearly every decade in history. There are fifty listed museums in Moscow and fifty-seven in Leningrad. To these must be added the houses turned into museums in every provincial town, the revolutionary museums displaying the heretofore hidden evidences of a century of conspiracy, and the Red Army Museums "for political instruction as a method of warfare."

A typical provincial museum is the one lodged in a delightful house overlooking the Oka at Nizhni-Novgorod. It was formerly occupied by a rich member of the local nobility, and the two lower floors are as they were, filled with Renaissance furniture, Persian carpets, Saxe and Sèvres and Chinese porcelains, to which have been added similar objects gathered from other houses in the neighborhood. On the top floor, by way of contrast, the brocaded rooms are grim with chains, instruments of torture, reproductions of prison cells and dossiers of the hunted revolutionists hailing from the same locality. The object lesson is complete.

As I recall even the few museums that I saw, I have a confused vision of accumulations that can only be expressed in terms of tons and acres. It seems incredible that there should be so much gold and silver plate in the world, so many miles of imported painting, such mountains of malachite and agate and lapis lazuli. I know the Tsars made porcelain, but were there never any

accidents in the imperial pantries? It looks as if the Revolution did not break a cup. One wonders about all the church vessels seized and melted during the famine, about the spoil of vandals during the early days of revolution and the loads of treasure taken out and sold in every capital. Nothing seems to be gone. The altar screens are still heavy with over-wrought gilt and one sees hundreds of the solid silver tombs that were the final perquisite of bishops. The state commission shops are crowded with gold and silver services and dreary piles of bibelots for which there are no buyers. Such objects are only an embarrassment in a proletarian world. They should serve as a solemn warning to intending revolutionists that the loot of revolution, however valuable to those who owned it, is worse than worthless to a community.

With all its facilities for exhibition, the government cannot begin to hang half the canvases it now possesses. Few private houses, after all, are fit for anything but private occupancy, and a great many works of art that might adorn a salon are out of place in public galleries. The number of homeless portraits alone is appalling. I have seen pictures stacked in a Russian cellar which would embellish any small-town gallery in the United States. The Hermitage has been enlarged to take in 250 additional rooms of the Winter Palace. Enriched by the addition of 7,000 additional paintings, 70,000 pieces of porcelain and other orphaned art objects in the same proportion, its collections are now more extensive than those of the Louvre. They are arranged admirably, and with a meticulous respect for their high rank. The museums of the proletariat recognize no

equality; they are more haughtily exclusive of the second-rate than the court of the Romanovs ever thought of being. Nowhere else, indeed, is the fate of the lower classes in the commonwealth of art so suggestive and so melancholy. The great aristocrats of art can enchant and inspire the multitude, as they do in the galleries of the Hermitage and the Russian Museum in Leningrad and in the interesting Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. The collections of French post-impressionists, left as they were hung by their owners in the Shchukin and Morosov houses, are unique and delightful. But what of the rest? Does communism put an end to the production of all but public and monumental art? With the passing of the private purchaser, what becomes of the painter, the sculptor, the decorator, the craftsman specializing in the "easel pieces" first made when the Renaissance began to consider the individual? It happens that most of the masterpieces hanging in the great galleries of Russia are easel pictures. They are not monumental and were made possible by private taste and private wealth. Will they have no successors in the new world? Must certain forms of art die, and what others will take their place?

Its effect on art is one of the most interesting and least discussed phases of collectivism. Lunacharsky says that all art is conditioned by the demand for it. By that he means, no doubt, that no luxury art — art which cannot be enjoyed collectively and has no reason for being except the gratification of personal taste — will be produced in a proletarian state. But what will be the standard of the collective? You look about in Russia for

products which might be expected to foreshadow an art made for the mass. You find that all the commodities of life, the goods manufactured by the state factories, are of almost unredeemed ugliness and tawdriness. The shop windows in all the towns are arranged without taste, and the objects they display are of uniformly poor quality and design. There has been no attempt so far to make beautiful the things everybody uses. The well-organized textile trust turns out sleazy and unattractive stuffs. The furniture on sale is flimsily built and mid-Victorian. I was about to say that since good taste is usually the fruit of education and some opportunity for comparison and selection, there cannot yet be a demand for beauty among people until now deprived of such opportunities. But then I remembered that the only fabrics or objects worth looking at in Russia to-day are those made by the peasants. The Kustarny industries, most of them small and giving employment in the villages during the long and idle winters, have been so prosperous on account of the goods famine that they are now being suppressed by wholesale as competitors of the government and dangerous nurseries of a new bourgeoisie.

Russian industry, so far as I saw, has turned out nothing of any distinction in design. The trucks, radiators, sewing machines and other such manufactured products are poor copies of the articles made outside. All the new buildings express utilitarianism without either the originality or promise of power embodied in the first American skyscraper. And they are not public buildings in the sense that they substitute for private ownership the space and grandeur and beauty of great communal gathering places. To a Russian friend I once expressed

admiration of one of the apparently new railway stations in Moscow. I said I could imagine there, as one can in the terminals of New York, the magnificent possibilities for collective enjoyment of popular gymnasias, dining rooms, concert halls, libraries, workshops. "Yes," he answered, perplexed, "but of course you know that this station was built before the war. And the fine public dining hall you admire is the first-class restaurant. The eating place for the proletariat is over there."

Lenin's little wooden tomb, simple and sincere, is still the most impressive specimen of communist architecture. The Lenin lithograph, indefinitely multiplied all over the country, is a pious atrocity as bad as the campaign pictures of presidential candidates that used to defy the voter — perhaps they do still — from the windows of American Main Streets. The statues are even worse. Lenin stood with outstretched arm and pointing finger on the landing of every stairway I ascended; the figure is so endlessly and so clumsily repeated that it has the mechanical effect of a traffic signal.

In vain the visitor seeks for a revolutionary or proletarian art. At an exhibition in the Revolutionary Museum in Moscow I saw the newest paintings and wood carvings. The range of subjects was inevitably limited, but the struggle of the workers was depicted with power and emotion. One felt there the living urge of passion and compassion that carries along all valid revolts against exploitation. I had seen pictures just as revolutionary, however, in the last Biennial in Venice; the French have been painting them since Millet, and as art or social



indictment they are far less biting than the cruelly detached delineations of the latest descendants of Goya and Zurburan.

Across the Moscow River, in a rambling block of old wooden exposition buildings on a wide, unpaved street, was an immense exhibit of the graphic arts; surely these, as offering opportunities for wide and cheap reproduction, might be considered proletarian. But impressive as the exposition was in extent and as a demonstration of the immense use and variety of educational charts and posters, its artistic interest was strictly limited to a small group of woodcuts and engravings. And in contrast to the swarming crowds interviewing the Old Masters in the Hermitage, it was strangely deserted, the only empty space I ever saw in Moscow.

In a shop on the Petrovka, at the same time, a corps of animated workers bundled up rolls of the newest posters to send to the villages for decoration for the tenth anniversary of the Revolution. Work stopped when two Americans went in one afternoon looking for posters; no more rolls were sent out that day. There was general eagerness to exhibit the latest masterpieces of the great proletarian art of propaganda. A dozen clerks went through the series with us; two sprang on a table to show off the big pictures; they all waited for our applause. Exceedingly ingenious was the book of designs sent to all the villages suggesting stage settings and street decorations for the celebration. A comparison of the tenth anniversary posters with the flaming manifestos of the first days of the Revolution, however, makes the present issue seem tame and mechanical. But posters are still the most effective of all developments of communist

pictorial art; they carry the gospel into the remotest corners of the empire. They are employed for every kind of campaign — hygienic, agricultural, anti-religious, political. In a socialist state there is no need to advertise goods; the commodities to be popularized are ideas, and these the posters broadcast with the help of strong color and crude cartoons.

In the use of print, the multiplication of books, periodicals and newspapers, there is a feverish activity. I was told that the number of books published in 1927 was about equal to the number published in 1913, but the editions are so much larger and the reading public has so enormously expanded that that comparison means nothing. More books are distributed in illiterate Russia than in the United States. Well-stocked book shops flourish where all other commodities are short, in towns that in America would hardly support a book counter in a department store.

Literature has gone through three distinct stages since the Revolution. Alexander Blok in "The Twelve," the powerful epic of the twelve Red Soldiers who go drunk and plundering and slaughtering through the streets of Petrograd, meet Christ in the snow and are pushed by Him along the road of revolution, expresses the Messianic mood in which Russia had awaited the Revolution and rose to it when it came. Blok was at the same time mystic and brutal realist, and "The Twelve" holds the note of exalted hooliganism struck by the revolutionary workers and peasants in the first intoxication of power. It is the one masterpiece of the decade. The "proletcult" period followed, the rise of

the so-called proletarian writers who swarmed from the workbench and the rabfacs when it was decided to have no white-fingered authors but only those who could wield the hammer. They were to crack the old glazes of literature and pound out on the forge iron images for the collective man of iron. This was the period of propaganda par excellence; the makers of "mob" literature were subsidized and encouraged. Maiakovski, whose work has the rough grating burr of a propeller, is the representative of this group.

The present literary output retains the vernacular of the first decade, subdued to the disillusioned and more realistic tone of the second. It is less rapt, less shrill but more cheerful and vigorous than the literature of yesterday. Much of it is produced by the writers christened "the traveling companions" when Trotsky and Lunacharsky won their fight in the Party to allow freedom to publish to non-proletarians willing to march with the Communists. The peasant is the protagonist of the latest Russian novels. He struggles and complains of oppression, but he is a different peasant from the gloomy neurotic of the fiction of the early part of the century. The difference is one measure of the effects of the Revolution. Russian literature to-day has no great names, but in spite of repression and isolation, it shows vitality and promise. As a profession it attracts many for the reason that the writer is one of the few workers whose profits are only limited by his sales. The royalties of a successful author can be larger than the wage of the most highly-paid technician; he is restricted in his themes and in the expression of his opinions, but he seems to be the only nepman not restricted in his earn-

ings. A tax expert I met had made 18,000 rubles in royalties on a book on taxes.

The critics were depressed. They felt, as one expressed it, "Kremlin-ated," walled in and weary of the same eternal patterns. Within those walls, however, there is free exercise for satire and the pattern allows a wide margin for the comic strip. The Soviet leaders are shrewdly aware of the necessity of a safety valve for popular dissatisfaction and permit to their supporters a surprising freedom of criticism, always provided it is of methods and abuses and not a real opposition. The visitor need not go beyond the newspapers and the humorous journals for all the ammunition he needs for attack and caricature. The blasting ridicule of Bim and Bom, the two circus clowns who enjoy the immunity of court jesters, is quoted everywhere. Their persons change, but they have attained the currency of popular figures of speech. Their buffoonery is darker and bitterer, but it is the Russian equivalent of the chuckle of Will Rogers swinging his political lasso. Bim and Bom are more outrageous and their slapstick is steeled; it is the bludgeon of the disarmed.

The most disappointing thing about the art of the Revolution is that as art it is so little revolutionary. Instead of something new and upsetting, one gets from the smashers of tradition the bust of the revolutionary hero, Lasalle, on the Nevsky Prospekt; its originality consists in being set on an odd pedestal, a little out of joint. The new monuments in plaster are rough sketches; in durable material they may be more impressive. I have seen a few exciting designs, like the telescopic revolving glass tower in perpetual motion, conceived by Tatlin as

a monument to the Third International, but nothing as original as that has been built and nothing in Russia can compare in novelty and audacity with the exhibits to be found in any exposition of industrial art in the United States, France, Germany or Italy.

One always returns to the theatre. The stage has been and remains a kind of Crystal Palace of all that is most native and creative in Russian art. The Revolution has used to the limit the popular passion for drama. Not since the day of the strolling players of the middle ages and never on such a scale have mime and pantomime entered into the life of a whole people. No wonder every one sees Communism as a new religion. It has gone back to the Ages of Faith for its technic; only then were all the arts part of one mighty ritual as they are now in Russia. The populace is drafted into the missionary drama as if the steppe itself were a stage for Maierhold. Any room is a theatre. There are literally thousands of folk theatres in every gubernia.

All other theatre is pale beside Russian theatre. It is full of tricks and antics — revolving stages, dancing screens, moving picture backgrounds to multiply moving crowds, half a dozen dizzy levels performing all at once. Acrobats swing on the gaunt girders and cranes and skeleton bridges in Maierhold's constructivist fantasies, the most gorgeous theatrical trickiness of all. Yet even the genius of Maierhold finds freedom cramping; he reverts to rehearsals and the employment and training of professional actors to be sure of an effective spontaneity. Lunacharsky, when I asked him, recommended a tragic satire called "The Case" at the Second Art Thea-



tre as the best performance on the boards at Moscow; neither new nor revolutionary, it only demonstrated how without a single trick the Russian theatre is still the best in the world. Lunacharsky himself was there to see it. In a box with his rather elegant actress wife and the Polish Minister, the Commissar of Education looked oddly aristocratic in the apparently proletarian audience. But what an audience it was! Whoever they were, those people in gray blouses who crowded the other boxes and leaned forward in the stalls, their absorption created an emotional atmosphere which heightened every effect of the play. The audience, I repeat, is the chorus in Russian drama. You can never get it whole when you see it transplanted and shorn of one of its essential parts.

The revolutionary stage has been better described and analyzed than any other expression of the last decade; it is the one phase of the larger drama that has been glimpsed by the outside world. But here again the Revolution itself has not inspired genius. In Moscow while I was there the theatres were always packed for "Hamlet," "Desire under the Elms," for Pushkin and Gogol, but the only revolutionary drama to be seen was the one poor play I saw. I regretted wasting a precious evening on cheap melodrama as old-fashioned and full of stale clap-trap as "The Heart of Maryland."

The opposite is true of the moving picture. The revolutionary films, like Eisenstein's magnificently evocative *St. Petersburg* and *Peasant* pictures, made for the tenth anniversary, follow *Potemkin* as the only super films produced in the last ten years. The effects are new; one gets in those pictures the first hint — and much more than a hint — of the merged mass. For the first time

there is a dramatization of the collective that no other medium has succeeded in suggesting. Even in the Eisenstein studios, however, I heard a director who had worked in America cursing because he had not a few Americans to give "punch" to the Sovkino productions. He showed me rooms full of the most regal stage properties in the world, real furniture for every period, costumes that empresses and marshals of the court had worn. He had the uniforms of the entire regiment of the Imperial Guard, too heavy with bullion for me to lift. "You see this aigrette?" he said, pointing to a general's cap. "Priceless. But one in pasteboard makes a better picture!" This director thought that the general run of Russian films could not compare with the American, and Russian audiences evidently shared his opinion, because it was with effort that we escaped old American pictures in Moscow, and the few native films we saw in other parts of the country were either very crude propaganda or merely commonplace. I waited in a long queue one night and paid 75 cents for a top gallery seat to see a much-touted new film. In a blatantly realistic world, it went versts beyond Hollywood in the direction of dripping sentimentality.

The chief ballerina in the newest opera, "The Red Poppy," was still the same who had charmed the dispersed audiences of a former generation. The music was different, but she pirouetted, a little heavily, in the old familiar steps the Russian ballerina has danced around the world. When a Bolshevist official asked me how I liked the new ballet and I answered that it was lovely in its old-fashioned way, he laughed.

"You are right," he said. "But have you seen the ikon collection in the Historical Museum? Ikons are as new to me, you know, as they are to you, and now that they are no longer religious and can be viewed simply as the expression of the ethos of their period, do you know what I think? I think we will have to go back and start a new art where those fellows of the seventeenth century left off. We haven't had a really native art of painting since, except the stage painters, because we haven't had a great period since that first merging of all the Russias; nobody has ever believed in anything hard enough to squeeze genius out of the people, whence genius always comes. We are beginning another live epoch now; in fifty years this faith will sprout a new breed of artists."

For most of us who go to Russia, like this Communist who went back, it is the old art that is new and astonishing. One lifts one's eyes idly from blue prints and blue blouses and discovers a lost fairyland. Here are a thousand uncelebrated churches, painted by forgotten journeymen, whose frescoes dim the precious walls that Giotto decorated at Padua and Assisi. Here are walled citadels, later but more variously and gorgeously capped and turreted, that extinguish the renowned walled town of Louis the Saint at Aigues-Mortes. Beside the lunatic exuberance of these domes and steeples, the riot of colored cupolas, the painted profiles of the familiar picture towns are lifeless and monotonous. And why, among the cities whose enchantment has been so many times described that one is never sure whether he feels or echoes it, have so few mentioned Moscow? Moscow is the real Russian masterpiece — the vivid and wanton

portrait of Russia by a Russian genius under the influence of vodka.

The next time I go to Russia I want to go on an art pilgrimage. I am grateful to Lunacharsky and the Communists for taking more pains to discover and guard the old art treasure than any one has ever taken before. I suspect my Communist friend is right when he suggests that it surprises and fascinates many of them, too, — to the disgust of the Left Wing realist, it must be said. I suspect they are developing a passion for Russia, these so long exiled and disinherited Russians, the strong passion of possession, and that the ethos of that powerful land will have its way with them yet.

THE WORLD FROM MOSCOW

Russia suffers from a decade of loneliness. From the outside her isolation appears to be a quarantine imposed on her for breaking all the codes and conventions of polite international society. We think of her as ostracized, and Russians allude to themselves with bitterness as cut off from the world. Every one refers to "coming in" and "going out" of Russia, and the phrases accurately describe the sensation of internment experienced on crossing the frontier. The traveler feels segregated, as if the whole of that aloof land were one vast Kremlin, filled with exciting but strange architecture, red-walled and moated and insulated from contact with the outer universe. When Maxim Gorki speaks of the pathos of the



new Russia he expresses in a word what most affects every sensitive observer. Part of that pathos, the pathos of struggle, of youth, of courage, of cruelty, of waste, of blindness, is the pathos of exile. Russia is in a worse state than a man without a country; she is a country without a world.

The mistake is to consider this exile as involuntary or to regard it as primarily political. On the other side of the wall you get the reverse view. There you see Russia doing the ostracising and setting up the quarantine. Politically she is on speaking terms with most of the nations of the earth, but diplomatic relations with France and Germany, Poland and Italy have not given her friends or strong supporters, nor lightened the isolation in which she lives. That isolation is less political than intellectual and moral, the effect of what Stalin calls the inevitable conflict between two irreconcilable systems and concepts of life.

The truth is that communism recoils from the lure of capitalism more nervously than capitalism recoils from the menace of communism. The ideas and standards of the outer world are feared by Moscow more than Bolshevik propaganda is feared in other capitals. That is clear from the moment you reach the Soviet boundary. The customs examinations are thorough enough for all your belongings, but it is books, printed matter, letters and documents, that are really scrutinized. These are invariably examined and passed on by more than one inspector; they are always questioned, often confiscated. Precautions against the entry of heterodox ideas are more minute and drastic than at any door on earth. In Italy, where there is a comparable censorship of the press, you

can buy at any news stand the leading newspapers and reviews published elsewhere. Once inside Russia the exile of your mind from any but communist thought is all but complete. In the one bookshop in Moscow selling foreign periodicals there is no American journal; the only papers from England are an occasional copy of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Socialist Daily Herald*; from France the *Temps* and *l'Humanité*; from Germany the *Berliner Tageblatt* and a couple of Communist dailies. Technical and scientific journals abound, but of the literature of ideas, or of any but socialist ideas, there is a total lack. The smallest and most backward Balkan town is richer in international publications than the capital of the "International."

All the resources of a regime in control of every department of life and thought are mobilized to keep the proletarian state unspotted from the world. The world is the enemy. It is capitalist, and this state sees itself beleaguered and boycotted by capitalism. In every school graphs and charts and outlines represent the course of history as a long series of conspiracies against the people. No power in that panorama, no movement in that march, has ever been anything but imperialistic. No wealth has ever been accumulated except by exploitation. The moneymaker is never such by virtue of industry, initiative, organizing genius, thrift, vision, or even blind luck or fortuitous circumstance. He is always the bloated beneficiary of a vicious system — literally bloated, because in spite of John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford and all the cadaverous warnings of the emaciating effects of millions, the rich are always fat. The examples of success smugly enshrined in American magazines are

the horrible examples in the parables of the new Russia.

In the newspapers there is never any report but evil report of bourgeois nations — and that means all nations. Governments are kept in precarious power by the machinations and combinations of bankers and industrialists. National and international crimes supply daily headlines. Considering how dark these crimes appear from any observation post, you can imagine how Cimmerian is the outer gloom from the windows of Moscow. The actual windows cloud the prospect even on the Tverskaya and the Kusnetsky Most. Beyond, they look upon a strange and distorted world. Of all the fresh outlooks I enjoyed in Russia none was fresher or more startling than the view through proletarian eyes of the world I had left behind.

For ten years Russian insularity has been so complete that there are no longer standards of comparison. Moscow is dangerously ingrown. The capital of a world empire and the centre of a great and extraordinarily vital social experiment, it is as full of gossip, suspicion and blind rumor as the capital of Albania. It has fewer foreign residents than any capital in the world, and the diplomats stationed there are spied upon, feared and cut off from any free and natural intercourse with the population. Their life is painfully furtive and sequestered. They occupy houses allotted to them by the Foreign Office, sometimes with the former owners in a room or two in the basement. A special committee is supposed to keep the embassies in repair, but when this committee is too slow for small emergencies like bathroom leaks and burnt-out fuses, the ministers have difficulty in in-

ducing ordinary plumbers and electricians to enter their houses. Since the dentists, hairdressers, workmen and all others who had anything to do with the British Mission were rounded up following the break with England, Russians give all the legations a wide berth. Visitors going in and out are closely watched. Except for perfunctory entertainments once or twice a year by Litvinov, vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs, the diplomats have no social life except a very restricted one among themselves. Officially they are most frequently invoked when some one is caught up in the net of the political police. Thus they hear of nothing but arrests, feel nothing but pressure and espionage, dwell always on the dark and spectral side of the Russian street. The foreigner who gets his view of Russia from the legations gets a very gloomy and depressing view, and wonders at the short-sightedness of a government which deliberately builds a barricade of suspicion and fear around the envoys of foreign powers.

Tourists are now for the first time encouraged, but it will be a long time before they number more than a few hundred a season, and as it is still almost impossible for Russians to travel outside, they are losing all knowledge of the ways of other peoples. When a delegation of workers from Moscow went last year to Norway for a congress they were shown some workers' houses in an Oslo suburb. They were incredulous; until in the last house they discovered a Communist and a picture of Lenin they refused to believe that such an exhibit of "luxury" was not capitalist propaganda. Any gesture of apparent idealism or generosity on the part of a bourgeois nation is under the same suspicion. Nothing is more

typical of the general state of mind than a remark I heard in Moscow to the effect that the Soviet government was able to overcome the famine, but that it was more difficult to overcome the danger represented by the American famine relief.

Belief that all the world is against them visibly stiffens the spirit of a people whose one luxury is to think of themselves as the spectacular protagonists of the class struggle, ringed about by hostile powers and principalities in their crusade for the emancipation of the oppressed everywhere.

I have made passing reference in these pages to the drilling of civilians we saw in our travels during Defense Week. The drills themselves, taken singly, might not have been impressive except as evidence of a general policy to train all civilians in the use of arms. Their repetition was impressive, and the sense they gave that all over the Union similar squads, composed of women as well as men, were going through the same primary lessons in the art of war. What struck us more than the drilling was the martial spirit. The Russians are not a militant people. As a population they are pacifist to an unusual degree; the stranger often marvels at their long-suffering patience and gentleness. All the more remarkable, therefore, was the warlike temper of the towns. The athletic meets of the youthful sports clubs were like military drills. In Kiev we saw all the central part of the city blocked off for a soldierly march of Comsomols reviewed by German officers. Observers of the great May Day parade this year in Moscow were excited by the sight of thousands of armed workers who followed the Red



Army in a startling demonstration of labor not only organized but ready for battle. Proletarianism in Russia is militant and militaristic. It does not desire war but it is taught to expect attack at any moment. Hate of the rest of the world is constantly inculcated in the schools and in the trade unions. The "International" and other battle hymns of the workers take on an alarmingly literal sound and meaning when heard in an atmosphere of such panic and suspicion.

It is estimated that conscripts at the rate of a million a year, making ten millions in all, have received professional military training during the decade of Bolshevik rule and are immediately available for service under the Red Army officers. The Red Army itself is a formidable military organization. Recruited and whipped into shape by Trotsky, a military genius whose only training had been in the marshalling of arguments and the organization of propaganda, it developed into such a machine during the Civil War period of the Revolution that by sheer weight of numbers and discipline it crushed opposition on a dozen fighting fronts. To-day it is greatly reduced in numbers — the present strength is 572,000 — but it is excellently trained, well-equipped with everything but heavy artillery, and thoroughly revolutionary in spirit. It is "the army of the proletarians"; the disfranchised classes are not allowed to enlist. The old Tsarist officers, some of whom had to be used at first on account of the complete lack of men trained as officers, and the officers elected from the ranks have alike been gradually displaced by sons of workers educated in officers' schools to which none but proved proletarians are admitted. While officers and men call one another

"Comrade" and the names and insignia of rank are different from those of other armies, the workers' guard is as rigidly disciplined as were the regiments of the German Kaiser.

Important and reliable as it is, however, the Red Army is only a nucleus. The objective of the government and the Commissar of War, Voroshilov, is to put the entire population under military draft, men, women and children, together with all supplies and industries, so that it can be mobilized as a whole in any emergency. Factory workers are equipped with modern rifles and trained to use them; thus a factory can be instantly transformed into a military unit. The whole Union is being organized as rapidly as possible into territorial divisions on the militia system. Voroshilov is regarded by those who know as one of the ablest and strongest men in the government. He is responsible for the arming of the workers and for the volunteer organizations in charge of the chemical warfare units, of the popular education campaigns and the collection of funds and flotation of loans for airplanes and military equipment. As a result of a more or less voluntary subscription, two hundred new planes, thirty air fields and five airplane factories have been added to the Soviet equipment.

The purpose of this huge military machine, you are told, is to enable the worker to guard his empire from a possible mass offensive of capitalism. If you ask whence the attack is expected, Tchicherin, Commissar of Foreign Affairs, answers that the western border is a danger line and that Poland and Rumania have the powerful backing of England and France. He points out that Rus-

sian frontiers are longer in Asia than they are in Europe, but that it is only the West that threatens. And if you suggest that invasion is unthinkable on the part of the brigades shivering with terror of Russia along the Rumanian and Polish borders, you are given to understand that the aim of what is to-day the most extensive military organization in the world is not alone the defense of Russia. The Red soldier is under oath to fight "in behalf of the working class of the Soviet Union and of the entire world." "Workers have no country," says the Marx Manifesto. Therefore the Red Army is regarded as the vanguard of a world army. It has a political as well as a military chief, and is constantly instructed in internationalism lest it develop a spirit of nationalism.

There is also the extraordinary political army, peculiar to Russia, which has no connection with the Red Army and functions as a kind of super-government independent of all Commissariats. In the time of the Tsars it was known as Okhrana, in the early years of the Revolution it was the Cheka, and since 1922 it has been called the United State Political Office, O.G.P.U. Its personnel and its methods have changed little under the different designations. The numerical strength of the Gay-Pay-Oo, as it is always called, is never published. It includes a small uniformed force on special police duty at the frontiers, the ports, the railway stations and in charge of the customs. The Gay-Pay-Oo officer is very useful in time of trouble and the traveler learns to call upon him whenever he wants information, efficient service or help. What other dealings he has with the political police he does not know. Ninety per cent of its members do not wear a uniform; they are spies in the biggest and

most powerful secret service in the world. The atmosphere of Russia has always been poisoned by espionage; it is still heavy with suspicion and vigilance. In the panic that seized Moscow after the break with Great Britain, the hunt for counter-revolutionaries was at its height and we moved in the shadow of inquisitions, arrests on suspicion, and deportations to Siberia and Solovetsky. That the Gay-Pay-Oo has never relaxed its defense against counter-revolution and that the Revolution is not yet over is apparent to any one who followed Mr. Walter Duranty's dramatic accounts in the *New York Times* of the Shakhta trial in Moscow last June. The engineers accused of counter-revolutionary sabotage in the coal mines of the Don basin were also on trial for "White" activities during the civil war in 1919-1920. The process was like a court martial in war time. The Gay-Pay-Oo agents are everywhere, even in government offices, watching officials at home and the Soviet ambassadors in foreign capitals. They are even more necessary abroad than at home, according to the Communist chiefs, who promise that they will never renounce the revolutionary terror until the last foe of the workers' government is disarmed.

The Russian view of the world as an enemy is not inconsistent with the Communist view of the world as a mission field. To watch the delegations of Western workers come and go in Moscow is to get a vivid sense of the surprised old city as the missionary center the Communists intend it to be. You behold a new breed of tourists rapt before sights no tourist ever wanted to look at before. They all see the same factories, the same schools, the

same clubs, the same sample fruits on the top of the proletarian apple cart. No matter; you have to admire and applaud the preening proletarians showing off. For my own part, I know of no more moving spectacle than the pride of the Russian worker, candid and childlike in his pleased astonishment at himself, strutting about for the first time in history as host and possessor. It is propaganda, a parlor exhibition, if you like — propaganda against ownership which is popular because it gives an illusion of ownership! The workers' delegations have all the special privileges reserved for the rich and powerful in other countries. For them automobiles wait outside the doors of hotels all day long while the rest of us take the cobbles or a tram. For them special trains are chartered that they may travel in comfort into the remote parts of the country and escape the chances of village inns. For them the Kremlin opens and the cloistered Commissars appear. Airplanes carry them over the mountains. They never stand in queues for tickets or enjoy the reek or the racy talk of the hard trains. The old tradition of Russian hospitality is maintained by the proletarian government towards its proletarian guests. They are guided and entertained so well that they see only one Russia, as in other days did the guests of princes.

Like all evangelists, however, Moscow's consuming zeal is for the conversion of the East. The Oriental delegations are more numerous and more impressed than the Western workers. To them Russia represents an advanced civilization. Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, Chinese, Turks are common in the streets. Hotels and shelters are maintained for the missionaries; here also are welcomed the outlaws and deportees from other lands whose zeal



for the gospel has been greater than their discretion. In the Luxe Hotel lived "Big Bill" Haywood and Bela Kun. A scowling Red soldier guards the desk in the dilapidated marble lobby, and the visitor has to deposit his passport before he is allowed to go upstairs.

We are now, of course, in the preserve of the Third International. The line between the government and the Comintern, never quite clear and constantly tripping Mr. Tchicherin and his colleagues in the Foreign Office, is here seen to be the difference between the national and the international administration of the same program, mostly by the same persons. The Russian Communist Party dominates both, and the program to which all three members of the trinity are pledged is world revolution.

In Saloniki and in Macedonia, in Sofia and in Kishinev, when I heard the familiar alarm of "Red" agitation, it seemed only a convenient general term to cover local discontents that needed no outside stimulus. Wherever I went in the Balkans I discounted the universal legend of Bolshevik activity as a fantastic exaggeration. But when I viewed the world from Moscow, I was not so sure. Those solemn Chinese boys are intent on learning how to stir up millions of coolies to take the trail blazed by the Russian proletariat. All these dark young men, grave and a little sinister, are in training to be evangelists among the overwhelming non-white populations whose wrongs the Third International, "friend of the oppressed nations of Asia," passionately espouses.

Not only Asia but Africa is drawn into this worldwide propaganda. The "spheres of influence" of wor-

ried European powers are trivial compared to this calm pretension to the guardianship of continents. From the Kremlin one sees the inevitable alignment and feels the creeping pressure of all the unpredictable conflicts of the future. I met an Arab one day who offered his help if I wished to see Stalin. "As an American you probably have no chance," he said. "But to an Arab, of course, all doors here are open."

If all the Orientals in the world weighed down one side of the scale and America swung high and light on the other, and if Russia had her choice, I doubt that in that quandary she would choose Asia. For as her attitude toward the capitalistic world is always complicated by her need of money, so that she must in the same breath curse capital and beg for it, and it is only by the help of accumulated wealth that she can forge the machine to crush the system by which wealth is accumulated, so her attitude toward America, the glittering and audacious masterpiece of capitalism, is influenced by a fervent and almost disinterested admiration for our industrial magic and our miracles of speed, production and efficiency.

To Communist Russia, America is the most interesting and the most irritating country on earth. It is the ultimate expression of all that pure Communists hate — an exploitation so insolent and illogical that even the exploited become rich under it; a capitalism so unbridled that every man is a capitalist; a popular psychology so brazenly bourgeois that no worker will classify himself as a proletarian. Here is a working class without class consciousness, a peasantry that does not know itself

peasant, an entire population joyously and successfully engaged in the accumulation of private wealth.

Like most Europeans the Bolsheviks think that Americans would do anything for money. Stalin suggested that American capital would have no scruple in lending money to build up communism if only it were guaranteed interest enough on its investment. "What do your capitalists care for this system or that system?" smiled Tchicherin, bland and unhurried in the guarded quiet of his midnight office hours. "What they want is profit." That capital under any circumstances could ever serve the state or society unless owned by the state is inadmissible by believers in the Marxian dogma that wealth, or "class property," "can only exist on condition that the immense majority of society shall have no property."

The unprecedented general prosperity of the United States contradicts the basic principle of a Manifesto declaring labor the sole source of value. Communists resent the attainment under capitalism of the results promised as the final triumph of socialism. They publish loud reports of American extortion, extravagance and oppression. "Why do you ill-treat your workers?" is the commonest question asked of an American in the villages. Yet America is always held up as the model to be studied and imitated. If by some incantation Soviet Russia could draw out of the conjuror's hat a ready-made model of the promised land of her dreams, an American would feel most at home in it. Even the ownership would not be very different; private trusts would merely be called state trusts. I met a trade union official at Kiev who was struggling with the problems

of unemployment, low production and poor equipment. He asked many questions about the organization of American life and labor. "But I think," he concluded thoughtfully, "that by the processes of industrial evolution, by technical skill and development of mass production, you have accomplished the distribution of wealth we aimed at by revolution."

Political recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States government is so greatly desired that no visitor to Russia is considered too insignificant to be wooed with that end in view. But what Russia most desperately wants of America is money to become like America. The staggering program of industrial development she has mapped out requires a staggering amount of capital, available only in the United States. Soviet officials declare that the increase in production and in equipment they have achieved in the past five years without outside help justifies the hope that they can expand and march under their own power. But they are not satisfied with the slow pace such independence necessitates. They have expanded by using their principal, inherited invested capital, and while there is a wide difference of opinion among economists as to whether the expansion represents the end of that capital, to be followed by acute crisis, or whether accumulation of capital is now proceeding at a rate greater than anywhere else in Europe, the fact remains that the biggest undeveloped market in the world cannot be satisfied without vastly larger investments than Russia herself can supply.

Concessions to foreign capitalists a Communist government gives reluctantly, as a necessary evil, in the

belief that all such developments hasten the realization of socialism. They are to be regarded, Stalin declares, as temporary grants, eventually to be taken over by the state, and are given for a limited time, ten, twenty or thirty years, on terms intended to be profitable enough to enable the concessionaire to get back his investment plus exceptional profits during the life of the contract. At the present time there are 110 foreign concessions in operation in Russia. The greatest number are held by Germans; Americans come second and the English third. The largest, most profitable and oldest concession is the Lena Gold Fields. The next most important is the Hariman manganese concession. But the Germans are most extensively and definitely committed to a policy of economic collaboration with the Soviets. Their investments are made under a guarantee by the government of the Reich, which banks on Russia as a future market no matter what are her political fortunes or the irritations of doing business in the present. Many German concessions, like all others, have failed; Soviet Russia is strewn with the wrecks of foreign enterprises. No investor can succeed without large reserves of capital and long experience in Russian methods. He is harassed by difficulties with labor under the complicated collective agreements, difficulties in finding responsible officials to deal with in a top-heavy administration, and difficulties in marketing under absolute government control. Once adjusted to the scheme, however, he enjoys unique opportunities for quick and incredible profits.

The government itself is almost fanatically literal in the interpretation of contracts and preens itself upon a scrupulous regard for business engagements. While re-



fusing to acknowledge the obligations of its predecessors, whether of the Tsarist or Kerensky regime, or to make any settlement for property confiscated from foreign firms, it has never repudiated its own agreements or defaulted in an obligation assumed in its own name. In several instances, the Harriman concession for one, it has been better than its bond. When it was found that the concessionaire could not make a profit on his investment the terms of the original contract were revised in his favor. Even at that, however, the concession could not be successfully worked and has now been abandoned.

Business between the Soviets and American firms amounted in 1927 to nearly \$100,000,000, a forty per cent increase over the year preceding and nearly twice as much as in 1913. Russia is now concentrating on tractorization, electrification and oil production and is buying in this country increasing quantities of oil and electrical equipment and agricultural machinery.

With or without diplomatic relations, such unofficial commerce between the two irreconcilable systems will continue to grow. Time works in favor of the demand for capital and recognition. Stabilization itself seems to be a moral argument for any system. A decade of power, with the prospect of other decades, overcomes more prejudice against the Soviet economy than all its polemic. And it must be remembered that the dilemma of the communists, forced into imploring the help of capital and willing, if the gain is great enough, to compromise on the question of old debts, is no greater than the dilemma of the capitalists, supplying for the sake of present profits building material for the machine being erected to destroy them. The

communists are at least self-excused by their belief that the end justifies the means. All their compromises, concessions and conventions are tentative and temporary. Russia is not in the grip of a political party or a political formula; it is the first entrenchment of an army believing itself called to the historic and inexorable rôle of bringing to an end the period of middle-class rule in the world. You can no more deter the soldiers in that army from trying to convert and overcome the nations of the earth than you could have circumscribed the passion of the first missionaries. So long as they are in control of a great empire they must use its resources for revolution and all their concordats will be truces.

The extent to which they have already influenced the world is clear to any one who takes the trouble to measure how much more powerful is the excommunicated Russia of to-day than Tsarist Russia ever was. The saw-toothed shadow of the Kremlin can be seen in all the post-revolutionary policies of Europe. Italy first went Fascist through fear of Bolshevism. Bela Kun is more responsible than any one for the dictatorship in Hungary. No power has so decisively affected the moves of Great Britain at home and in the East. The Balkans are toned up or stirred up by the neighborhood of Russia. Rumania partitioned the land among the peasants as a measure of inoculation. The extensive programs of land division in all the countries of central Europe, together with much democratizing legislation, are directly due to terror of the Soviets. Whatever happens to Russia in the future, the world can never again be the same as it was before the rise of the proletariat to power.

MOSCOW, ROME, NEW YORK

WITHIN the short space of three weeks I have had the exciting and illuminating experience of mingling with the blue blouses in the Red Square in Moscow, with the black shirts in the Piazza Colonna in Rome, and with the all-American motley in Broadway and Times Square. In three weeks three worlds. Three epochs, three civilizations, three entirely different versions of the Bill of Rights. Three capitals that in less than a dozen years have emerged from cities into symbols and become names and local habitations for the forces and ideas now contesting for the domination of human society.

At the end of the war Moscow to most of us was only the vague trading center of a vague empire. It was

the bizarre background for a history with which we had no connection, for Ivan the Terrible and Boris Gudonov, for Cossacks fighting Tartars, for the most heroic failure of Napoleon. Of all untried social theories communism had the fewest adherents, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was no more than an inflaming and inflating phrase.

Five years later Rome, apart from the Vatican, was still the uneasy capital of a second-class kingdom; the Forum and the Seven Hills were only the graveyards of our ancestral civilization; the Appian Way led to no grandeur that was not of the imperial past. Fascism had just made its sensational March, but Mussolini himself did not yet know whether it was a hike of Boy Scouts or a revolution.

And New York, the metropolis of the Americas, was not until after Wilson and the defeat of Europe the metropolis of triumphant and opulent democracy. The topless towers of Manhattan Island were not universally recognized as the inevitable architecture of the latest and greatest citadel of world power.

To-day two dictatorships have grown strong enough to challenge the principles on which that power is based. One is the victory and the other — since Italy is the only Western country the Bolsheviks came anywhere near conquering — is the defeat of the same Revolution. Neither is quite what it claims to be. Communism is still an untried theory. The doctrine expounded to the rest of the world is not practiced in Russia, but that does not mean, as I have several times suggested in these pages, that it has been abandoned as an article of faith; it will continue to be passionately preached and promoted.

Likewise Fascism, the system of government and theory of life improvised in odd moments by Mussolini, is not yet applied to Italy; at home, however, it is something a great deal more organic and fundamental than the old-fashioned ebullitions of chauvinism to which the name is indiscriminately attached abroad.

Fascism is not, moreover, intended for exportation. Mussolini and the Fascist philosophers are perpetually reiterating that their invention — which is not an invention at all, of course, but a historical development as inevitable in the welding of Italy as revolution was inevitable in the awakening of Russia — was made in and for Italy. They believe that class collaboration will eventually be enforced elsewhere in the struggle to harmonize capital and labor, but they attempt no world propaganda. Communism, on the contrary, is a missionary creed; it is bent on converting the world and to that end subsidizes class warfare and preaches revolution.

Thus there is no parallel between the world rôles of Fascism and Communism. One is nationalism menacing other nationalisms, the other is internationalism threatening all nationalisms. But in domestic practice, poles apart as the two systems are in genesis and intention, the preposterous processes of logic lead both to different forms of the same state socialism: in Russia state socialism based on working-class rule and state ownership of industry; in Italy state socialism based on class collaboration and state control of industry. It is the collective against the corporation, man rigidly de-classified against man rigidly classified. Democracy and the rights of the individual have no place in either scheme; the



supreme state and the sovereign class alike submerge the citizen in the mass.

Democracy itself, for that matter, is never able to live up to its professions. It justifies the Communists when they condemn it because it does not allow the majority to rule; it confirms the Fascists when they discard it because it does. Moscow contends that democracy is not representative government; Rome that representative government is obsolete and unsuited to the present organization of society. Yet such is the hypnosis of that infatuating word that both Stalin and Mussolini, in the same breath in which they reject democracy and all its works, cannot help boasting that their systems have more "real democracy" than ours. They agree in nothing, the two revolutionists whose beginnings are so much alike, who fall so often into the same phrases, except in the assertion that America is a plutocracy, governed and corrupted by unbridled capital.

In practice, Communism, Fascism and Democracy all compromise with humanity. Fascism is still the most uncompromising because it is not yet in operation. Each can be judged not as a philosophy but only by the manner in which the compromises work. And each does in fact create a different world for a man to live in. No one could believe how different who has not been catapulted from one to another. With the least possible interval, we were whisked from the Gay-Pay-Oo at the end of Russia to the Fascist guard at the beginning of Italy; and thence, while the sight and sense of contrast were yet sharp and shocking, over the undistracting sea to the unearthly pinnacles — a Russian graph in granite! — of the port of Manhattan.

On my last day in Moscow, I stood at one end of the Red Square, facing the disordered domes of St. Basil's, and reviewed the proletarian parade in the light of a summer's observations. There were the same sober, sturdy and undecorative crowds shuffling over the rough cobblestones; the same daily queue of stolid worshipers waiting to see Lenin; the same Red sentries barring the Kremlin gate against any visitor; in the dusty galleries of the arcade the same jumbled windows, as if the merchandise had been thrown in long ago and forgotten; the same sad and solitary tea-bibbers in the shabby café.

The perspectives I looked back upon were all like this. Life under the proletarian dictatorship is immensely simplified, stripped down to bare essentials, various and enlivened as it has never been in Russia for the working classes; at the same time it is complicated and weighed down by the system itself. Every operation is slow and difficult when the motor power is the mass. The uninterested attitude of seller to buyer in the state shops is typical of all commerce and social relations. There is no competition to add liveliness to the day's business. Government officials seldom emerge from the walled citadel into which nobody else is permitted to enter, but government is everywhere and in everything; it is at your elbow all day long. You lead a constantly supervised life. You have no personal affairs, few personal choices. Communism is the contradiction of the old English ideal that the best government is the least government; it is, of course, the devouring octopus among governments.

I had had glimpses of the cumbrous operation of the most levelling and regulating system yet devised for

making men equal. The dictatorship of the proletariat. But what is the proletariat? It is a word strange to the American ear, and as I gazed upon it here exemplified, I wondered if Russia is not reviving something fast disappearing in Europe as well. Does the dictatorship of the proletariat arise in the hour of the decline of the proletariat? In the philosophy of Marx it is only a temporary phase of the social revolution. Its purpose is to clear the ground of the growths of the past in preparation for the abolition of all classes and the creation of a free and equal society. It is directed not against an aristocracy — even in 1848, the year of the Marx Manifesto, the nobility was already a negligible factor in the class struggle — but against the trading, owning, urban, industrial, political class, the middle class destroyed in theory in “*Das Kapital*” and for the first time in fact in a land of aristocrats and peasants. Elsewhere, as a consequence of a mechanical development unimaginable in the last century, the proletariat is more and more absorbed in the middle class.

Russia had to have a revolution to catch up with the movements of evolution. To Americans bourgeois and proletarian are words of another epoch, and revolutionists who accept literally even the advanced social ideology of sixty years ago seem oddly reactionary. Moreover, does not the ruthlessness of the transitional period of the dictatorship develop a new lower class and its colossal administrative machine a new upper class? And is not the process of equalization thus continually nullified?

Moscow is the most interesting capital in the world because it is full of questions like these; watching its

race to overtake and get ahead of civilization is like throwing a searchlight down the twisted paths of progress. I turned from the Red Square with a sigh — partly for myself, that I had to leave unanswered so many even of the answerable questions, and partly for this avid young Russia that in her eagerness to learn has no such chance as Marx and Lenin had to read the lessons of uncensored history.

In Russia I was constantly noting resemblances between the rule of the Communists and the rule of the Fascists, but when I arrived in Rome from Moscow my first impression was of enormous difference. Coming out of Russia is as upsetting as going in. "I have never had any greater shock than plunging into the outer world," writes a friend after several years' stay in Moscow. "I felt like a being from another planet suddenly coming face to face with real people without knowing either their language or their manners . . . I feel I'll never really understand the people who have not been 'through' Russia."

The normal Roman crowd in the Piazza Colonna was, after Russia, an abnormal crowd — silk stockings, polished boots, current fashions, vivacity, variety, color. Loved because it includes the Caesars and the Apostles, the Renaissance and the baroque, the crimson Curia and impudent Black Shirts in the same incomparable small-town circle, Rome for the first time by contrast looked suave, well-paved and metropolitan. An orchestra was playing Verdi and Respighi under the carved column of Marcus Aurelius. Chattering groups sipped coffee and vermouth under silk-shaded lamps on the sidewalk. In

the glittering arcade another orchestra competed with the one in the square. Motor horns shrieked up and down the Corso like an unresting fire brigade. Noise, and echoes of noise; the past and the present shouting.

You could not be five minutes in the Red Square without knowing that there had been a Revolution, so proletarianized is the scene before you. You would know that the log pyramid squatting by the Kremlin wall meant challenge and in the windows you would see that all the former values were no more. Around Marcus Aurelius stand three palaces. In one, most of the day and night, sits the dictator of Italy. In another, directly opposite, was the Roman office of the *Corriere della Sera* when it was the great organ of liberal opinion. In the third is the headquarters of the new labor corporations. But unless you had penetrated behind the walls of all those strongholds and heard them speak, and were aware of the significance of the Black Shirts leaning against the old wall of the Chigi and of the chief of the Black Shirts at work behind the lighted windows on the second floor, you would not guess that anything had happened in Italy.

If Russia was ever gay, it is not gay now. And neither, for one who knows it, is Italy; it has more bands and fewer songs than it used to have. It has become strenuous; the tempo of life, still andante with occasional wild crescendos in Russia, in Italy is an exaggerated staccato. After ten years the Revolution which overturned a world order and abolished an entire upper layer of society had become less revolutionary. After five years the revolt which started as hardly more than a militant shift in administration, with little bloodshed,



no confiscation and no startling change, had become more revolutionary. Rome is now only inaugurating experiments, in some respects as bold as those of Moscow, to overturn the political and erect the economic state.

There are Communists who say that Mussolini plagiarized their organization when he saw that it worked, and they are confirmed by the almost exact parallel between the structure of the Communist and Fascist parties. Both are militant and dogmatic minorities, about equal in size, which makes the Italian ruling group nearly four times more numerous in proportion to the population. Both are an élite, exclusive, frequently purged of undesirables, under the most rigorous military discipline. Communism has its younger armies, the Comsomols and the Pioneers, and Fascism its "Avanguardisti" and "Ballila." Both make a fetich of physical fitness and political loyalty. The Fascist Grand Council has the same relation to the government as the Communist Central Committee. Since Lenin died the Russians have not the one man for a one-man dictatorship. Nobody in the Kremlin is as all-powerful as Mussolini; without him, however, the Secretary General of the Fascisti might have the same dominating influence in Italy that Stalin has in Russia.

Neither regime has ever been freely voted upon by the people. The Italian municipal councils, like the Soviets, are under the control of the central government. The late relic of the Italian Parliament, like the All-Union Congress, discussed only measures proposed and approved by the government. There is, however, more general discussion in Russia than in Italy of all but the most important issues. Russian workers and peasants

have a sense of participation in government so far denied to Italians of any class. Within the limits of the system they have more freedom to criticize. The press in Russia has the double control of ownership and censorship and is therefore freer, always within the same narrow limits, to publish protest and reproof. Real opposition is, of course, impossible in either country, and both dictatorships have terrorizing agencies of espionage and repression.

In this, however, although the Black Shirts on patrol duty are more swaggering and irritating than the Gay-Pay-Oo, and the regular Red police seem even more casual and gentle, if that were possible, than the regular Italian police, the Carabinieri, the Fascists do not leave anything like the wide trail of terror blazed by the Communists. They have not, for one thing, the terrible tradition of Russia. Italians are a people long civilized and enfranchised, unused to tyranny. The present regime is the despair of the old Liberals, the curse of the chafing Socialists. Its brilliant achievements are mocked by political exiles and political prisoners, shadowed by suppressions and oppressions. But there has not been a single political execution in Italy and the storm aroused by the fate of Matteotti and Amendola demonstrates that nothing in the history of Fascism is remotely comparable to the wholesale executions, pogroms and brutal round-ups of persons suspected of any shade of counter-revolutionary opinion which still terrorize Russia. Political opposition only is silenced in Italy; in Russia any contrary idea may be counter-revolutionary. Normal intellectual or social life is impossible. In Russia I dared not seek out for interview any bourgeois, social revolutionary, priest

or Communist in opposition. I was afraid of the consequences, not to the interviewer but to the interviewed. In Italy I have talked freely to Socialist leaders, visited Mussolini's bitter enemies among his former associates in the Romagna, and listened to the scathing frankness of prominent Liberals.

In Italy, as in Russia, all workers must be organized into unions controlled by the dominating party, and when the corporative state is fully organized they will vote as in Russia only as members of these unions. The difference is that in Italy the voters elect the parliament and not the town council whereas in Russia they elect the town council and not the parliament; in one case they choose from a Fascist list only, selecting two hundred, say, out of four hundred names, with the chance of drafting a new list in the unlikely event that the whole government slate is rejected; in the other there is also one list only for the local Soviets, but more discussion of candidates. The fundamental difference is that in Italy the employers as well as the intellectual and manual workers have their own unions and their votes. The Communists say that the Italian labor syndicates are not free associations; the forbidden strike they regard as unfair disarmament of the worker in his struggle with capital. Russian workers have the theoretical right to strike, but as in striking against the state they strike against themselves they seldom exercise it except against foreign concessionaires. They have labor courts composed entirely of workers instead of the mixed labor magistracies of Italy, and also a larger participation in factory management.

Neither Fascist syndicates nor Communist unions

are regarded by the International Labor office at Geneva as free associations in the sense that the worker has any choice as to the union he joins or any option but to join it. In Russia the labor unions are the most powerful arm of the dictatorship. Under present economic conditions, they cannot enforce the seven-hour day, or raise wages beyond the bare cost-of-living index, but they are consulted in the appointment of the administrators of industry, and the traveler fortunate enough to have their recommendation knows how potent it is in opening all doors. Russia is, after all, a workers' government. Italy is not; but it is interesting to hear the rumbles of capitalist discontent in Milan and to note that while Bill Haywood lived out his last years impotently in the Hotel Luxe in Moscow, the I. W. W. agitator who worked with him, organizing Italian laborers in the United States, is now the head of all the labor corporations in Italy. Edmondo Rossoni sits in the labor headquarters in the Piazza Colonna, almost the only co-worker of Mussolini who has held his post from the beginning.

Mussolini says that he has transformed his old socialism into a system of class collaboration to take the place of class warfare. Russian workers do not have to consider any class but their own, and will never voluntarily substitute collaboration for supremacy. That is the fundamental impasse in which all the parallels end. However far the Fascist system swings to the Left, as it is swinging and is bound to swing as the result of the unprecedented organization of labor in Italy, and however far the Communist swings to the Right, as it has swung and will swing again in its oscillations between the radi-

cal minority and the peasant majority, the two systems can never meet except in battle.

Until its height and power smote me after excursions into the citadels of dictatorship, I felt as if I had never seen New York, almost as if I had never seen America. From the Red Square to Broadway is a jump that shatters the sense of reality. One moves from fantasy to fantasy, from the fairy-tale irrelevance of the silhouettes of Russia, where ten years have hardly changed a bulb or altered a line, to the appalling sky-rocketing with girders and glass that steel-engraves a new profile for New York every year. Of the two, Manhattan is the more fantastic; far more than Moscow it looks the capital of the permanent revolution. Far more than Moscow it is international. The straggling groups of students in the three Communist seminaries under the shadow of the Kremlin would have been lost among the surpliced seminarists from all the lands of the earth swarming in the Vatican gardens. But in New York I heard more languages in a day than I had heard in all of Europe in a year; Moscow revives the forgotten dialects of minorities, and New York mixes the tongues of Babel in a strange argot which in every accent thinks itself American.

Broadway was blinding after long absence in shadowed capitals. With its lights racing around in the sky, its temples and pyramids on top of towers, its golden chasms filled with streaming people, its brass and blaze and crackle, its infernal fume of gasoline, Broadway was the incandescence of all American Main Streets fused into one. For Moscow's human queues waiting to buy



flour, queues of motor cars in an endless lockstep waiting to get into theatres. For the ill-shod, silent girls in cotton slippers, giggling, animated manikins stepping straight out of to-day's fashion advertisements. New York never struck me as hilarious, but after the tensions of Moscow and Rome, it shouted with laughter. It was frivolous, irresponsible, spendthrift, light-hearted.

Above all, it was free. One mentions liberty with diffidence. Most returning travelers harp on the prohibitions, the blue laws, the fits of vice crusading, play censoring, heresy hunting, hundred-per-cent intolerance, periodically epidemic in this Republic. But when one arrives from really censored lands the air of liberty is more intoxicating than wine and more immediately perceptible than Ku Kluxers. Forty per cent vodka is the most plentiful article of diet, outside of cucumbers and sunflower seeds, to be found in Russia; but it is not a perfect substitute for freedom of opinion. And there are thirsts that even the golden wines of Falerno cannot satisfy.

Italy and Russia may be more efficient and more equalitarian when their populations are registered, distributed and represented as economic producers under their separate hierarchies, but the American will always shrink from such categories and compartments. He may toil harder than the Russian worker, be more pigeon-holed than the unit in the Italian corporation, but he will fight to the death against being classified as a proletarian, and against voting only as a bricklayer or a bookkeeper. He will not easily surrender his futile right to be a political unit and to express himself at the polls, on the rare

occasions when he feels like expressing himself at all, as a human being.

Communism and Fascism have not built capitals. They are both uncomfortable tenants in cities which fit them as little as Moscow fits its population or Rome its honking traffic. But New York is obviously the monstrous creation of a new power; is it capitalism or democracy? One feels here, after Moscow, an oppressive opulence and waste — an insane and dangerous making of money by money. Yet the individual is less crushed under the annihilating towers of New York, is less lost in the congestion of its sclerotic arteries, than he is under the weight of the mass in the wide spaces and under the low walls of Moscow. He is once more at liberty to be himself. He lives without a police permit, reads one story in one paper and a different one in another, has a choice of lies or a favorite version of truth, discovers a momentary meaning in a meaningless phrase, "the freedom of the city."

In Moscow they are proud of having the proletariat in the boxes in the theatres, and the bourgeois and the intelligentsia, if they can go at all, in the top gallery. New York, by a different process, has achieved the same result. Russia has made the proletariat free, but America has made it rich.

This democracy, if it be democracy, will never work either as justly or as rationally as communism would work if it could be made to work. A discursively political form of government cannot be as logically representative and efficient as the Italian corporative state is planned to be. The best democrats yearn for such improvements and revisions of the Magna Charta. It is

only when they find them, find them good, are moved to admiration by their ingenuity and their thoroughness, that they are entirely satisfied to let other people enjoy them.

But that conclusion is too simple. One rushes to conclusions in the first fine rapture of rediscovering American security. In such security it is easy to forget the significance of the movements taking place in less prosperous areas of the earth. Of these Russia is the largest, the youngest, the most pregnant. Above all, the most fluid. It is already in the third phase of a revolution which the majority of Americans still think of in the fantastic terms of the period of militant communism. Only a few have got beyond the New Economic Policy or realized that two revolutions are taking place simultaneously in Russia: one the native peasant revolution, the disorganized push and stretch of a great people freeing itself from autocracy and landlordism, and the other the imported, well-organized urban revolution of the Bolsheviks. Since 1925 both have developed strength and consistency. Industrially, in spite of handicaps, more progress has been made in the past two years than in the nine years preceding. Every one with whom I talked, Russian and non-Russian, partisan and critic, agreed that however unsatisfactory conditions are to-day, the improvement in prices, quality and output of goods has been remarkable. At the same time the peasant, thanks to the Bolshevik, has become articulate and exigent. He eats his crops where he once starved, which is good as far as it goes, although it means that he cannot exchange his produce for anything half so valuable. The industrial revolution and the agrarian revolution are measuring

strength. All the recent policies of the Communist Party represent a new attempt to communize the peasant. It is no longer the wild utopian effort of 1918 and 1919, but a better organized drive to the same end against the same resistance. To any one who considers the Russian rulers opportunists only, this resumption of hostilities should demonstrate the contrary. They are, in fact, debarred from any large and successful opportunism by an unconquerable faith in an abstract theory which they believe can be applied by force.

When Stalin says that the system being developed in Moscow is a direct challenge to the system that has developed New York, and that the two are so irreconcilable that they cannot exist in the same world without eventual collision, he speaks in the prophetic sense which Communists affect in their long, dehumanized views of the future. Nevertheless, eleven years of class dictatorship are already a challenge to democracy which is not answered by ignoring it. To American democracy the challenge lies in the circumstance that the peoples most enamored of American success imitate every American method except the method of government, borrow everything from the United States except its Constitution. Even though the Russian people have not chosen their present form of government, it is significant that when they speak of becoming "Americanized," as they do constantly, they do not mean becoming free or democratized. They mean becoming tractorized, electrified and generally mechanized. And that means that America is a better advertisement for prosperity and technical efficiency than for democracy. That there is any connection between the two, that free institutions

and unconsciousness of class have anything to do with mechanical development and wide distribution of wealth, we have failed to make manifest to the world.

Elsewhere I have referred to moments in Russia when the whole spectacle seemed a gigantic parody, the more blasting because so solemn, of the age of industry. Bolshevism is frankly a mockery of civilization; against the morals, manners and standards of value painfully evolved through struggling centuries by the rest of mankind it employs the "revolutionary laugh," caricatures both God and Mammon, renders neither to Caesar nor to Christ. But it never laughs at the creations of capital; it desires them too bitterly. Communism and capitalism in the long view envisage the same kind of a world. They pursue man to an identical end. The effect of the unresisted pressure of either is to crowd him into a collective. At the apex of the pyramid the two systems meet; they are in deadly earnest about the same things.

That is the discovery that flickers like the shadow of a fly across the vision of the sightseer and brushes him every now and then with the light wing of satire. The irony lies in the fact that what he sees is not parody but plagiarism. The antithesis of communism is not capitalism; the planning boards of Moscow are less influenced by the "Kapital" of Marx than by the golden legend of capital in America. The true antithesis of communism is democracy.

But where is democracy? Moscow rises from its cobblestones, callow and cocksure as a *bez priziorny* defying all the policemen of the established order. It has not pondered very deeply its crashing and rancorous reformation. Illiterate of the past, it spells the doom of



democracy out of the big primer of the future. Rome mounts the rostrum of the seven hills. It has not thought out very far, either, its glib amendments to the bill of rights, but with the same adolescent shrillness it reads an obituary of democracy in the illuminated missal of the past.

And New York, blind in its tall glass houses, is the real birth-place of these revolts. Its captains of industry are the revolutionists who have changed the face of civilization and called into being a new breed of rebels caring nothing for political and demanding economic enfranchisement. These captains are born of democracy. That the breath that inflates them is the wind of free opportunity no one can doubt again who tastes this ethylated air after the heavy atmosphere of the campagna and the steppe. Until, however, democracy itself enlists such buccaneers, and the intelligence and passion of America are spent to modernize and vitalize the processes of government, to make them contemporary with the processes of production, it cannot be expected that the skyscraper will stand out as the symbol of the Constitution. It stands out as the symbol of capitalism; it is the architectural flourish of democracy but its admirers turn Fascist and Communist when they attempt to copy it. How, then, can those who live in the glass houses throw stones?



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